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**Weaving a pedagogical web: a
qualitative investigation of secondary
physical education teachers' practice**

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Abstract

While the close investigation of teachers' classroom practice received considerable attention in the 1960s and 1970s, fine-grained observational studies of classrooms have progressively disappeared from the research landscape. Research in recent decades has tended to have a restricted focus of attention, concentrating on the objective measurement of 'effective' teaching to identify forms of classroom practice that can raise educational standards. This research agenda has been increasingly critiqued for oversimplifying the complex nature of classroom life, but capturing a more complete picture presents a number of challenges. There is a need for researchers to provide a fine-grained account of teachers' practices in the classroom while giving a sense of the purposes framing these actions together with an alertness to salient contextual influences.

The study presented in this thesis set out to engage with all these challenges and provide a 'fresh' interpretation of teachers' day-to-day practices in comparison to many past studies. Given the intent to capture both teachers' practices and how they framed these actions, Robin Alexander's (2008a, b) definition of 'pedagogy', which highlights the need for researchers to adopt a 'bigger picture' perspective, was an appropriate heuristic guide for this study. Six teachers of physical education working in different secondary school contexts participated in this study and a key concern in sampling was the desire to recruit highly competent practitioners. A pilot study and conversations with a number of key informants ensured the participants chosen were highly skilled teachers.

This study was conducted in two inter-related phases. The first phase of the research involved tracking these teachers in their school context and 88 lesson observations were conducted to view them 'in action' with classes. The second phase involved conducting a semi-structured interview with each teacher to explore the insights gained about their practice during the observation phase of the research. A theoretical framework – featuring five framing categories and a 'teacher-pupil power dynamic' element – was constructed to encapsulate the main findings from the observation and interview research. The five framing categories represent the patterns of classroom interaction identified in this study, i.e.: teacher-directed, teacher-guided, pupil-led, pupil-initiated, and teacher-pupil negotiated practice. There was a degree of variation in all the participant teachers' practices that were observed in this study, contrasting markedly with research in the physical education literature reporting an over-use of 'direct' teaching.

The ‘teacher-pupil power dynamic’ derived from observation and interview work and is composed of two related dimensions. The first dimension captures the ‘fine-tuned’, ‘negotiated’ and ‘responsive’ nature of these teachers’ practices and highlights how teachers and pupils simultaneously shape classroom events. The second dimension encapsulates the core factors – respect, familiarity, time, and context – shaping teacher-pupil relationships and the decisions made about classroom practice. The thesis sets out how the teachers in this study carefully enacted a repertoire of teaching approaches by: ‘fine-tuning’ practice in advance of lessons taking place; ‘responding’ to situations in the immediate act of teaching; ‘negotiating’ the learning intentions for lessons with the pupils; and making judgements about practice against the changeable nature of teacher-pupil relationships. These insights contribute to the education and physical education literature by presenting a dynamic picture of classroom life and suggest that a more responsive, interactive form of teaching was displayed by these teachers than is revealed in the majority of past research studies.

The central insights gained from this study contribute to research on pedagogy by providing a close analysis of the micro-interactions that take place in school classrooms and the influences shaping these interactions. A related and equally important contribution to pedagogy emerged from the sustained period spent observing these teachers, which developed a deep understanding of their teaching actions over time and across different physical activities and stages of schooling. The teachers in this study both responded to, and shaped, the dynamics of the classroom; and the interactive forms of teaching that they displayed are not adequately captured in existing definitions of pedagogy. Accordingly the thesis presents an expanded version of Alexander’s (2008b) definition of pedagogy that foregrounds the dynamic nature of teacher-pupil relationships.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed by myself, that the work is my own, and that the work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Background

This thesis investigates teachers' actions as they interact with pupils in school classrooms. While a personal interest in this topic has endured since my undergraduate studies, the present study has been inspired by a dissatisfaction with the ways in which existing research has portrayed teachers' practice in school settings. One main source of dissatisfaction is the tendency of past research studies to report teachers' actions in the classroom in isolation from both the purposes framing these actions and the contexts where these educational activities take place (Alexander, 1994; LeCompte, 2009). Overlooking the purposes and contextual matters that inform and shape these practices, confines the role of teaching and the work of teachers to a "mindless, purposeless, and random" pursuit (Alexander, 1994, p. 17). There appeared to be a need for a research study that avoided this isolated perspective. Therefore, this present study aims, in contrast, to capture teachers' actions in the classroom while giving a sense of the reasons and purposes framing these actions, together with an alertness to salient contextual influences.

Another source of dissatisfaction with past research is the virtual disappearance of fine-grained observational studies of classrooms (Atkinson, *et al.*, 2003; Ball, 2004; Delamont, 2012a, b; Wragg, 1999). There was an upsurge of interest in the close investigation of classrooms in the 1960s and 1970s, but few research studies have been conducted in this way in recent years. Contemporary research has tended to concentrate on the objective measurement of 'effective' teaching with the aim of identifying forms of practice that teachers can implement to raise educational standards. While these large-scale forms of research have presented insights of some value for present day practice, these studies have dominated the research landscape in ways that are not altogether helpful (Rex, Steadman and Graciano, 2006). As Chapter 2 will reveal, they not only adopt a straightforward interpretation of teacher-pupil interaction, but their dominance has largely

prevented alternate interpretations of classroom life from emerging in contemporary research literature. Given that fine-grained observation studies once contributed significantly to the research landscape (Wragg, 1999), but these have received limited attention in more recent times, I believe returning to this perspective will provide valuable insights into class settings in their present day form.

A final source of dissatisfaction comes from the widespread popularity of, and expectation for, research scholars to align with the “pessimistic” trend in existing educational literature (Delamont, 2012a, b). In my former role as a practising physical education teacher, I was struck by the strong desire across the educational research community to bring negative practices into view and report on the failings of contemporary education systems. I am not denying there is scope for radical improvement to educational systems, but as explored in Chapter 2, the prevalence of this “pessimistic” trend has skewed our existing conceptions of teachers’ classroom practice and prevented accounts with more appreciative messages from surfacing. There appeared to be the need for a research study that transcends these deficit-based starting points and looks, instead, to share stories about ‘good’ teaching while remaining sensitive to the challenges faced by teachers in their everyday practice.

Drawing on my personal interest in this topic, and my concerns about existing educational research, the main aim of this current study is to present a ‘fresh’ interpretation of teachers’ classroom practices. Before progressing into the main thrust of this thesis, it seems important to sketch out a backdrop in the remainder of this chapter and situate this current study for my readership. Therefore, the next section will set the scene by providing an outline sketch of the education system where the research takes place and the subject area where I conducted this study; revealing the educational policy expectations in the country and past research into teachers’ classroom practices within the subject area. A subsequent section will provide a general summary of the methods employed in this thesis. Against the backdrop of the limitations identified in existing research, this section will set out

the ways in which research methods were employed and highlight the potential for this study to make a methodological contribution to the research literature. A final section will outline the structure of this thesis and provide the reader with an overview of the material presented in each chapter.

1.2 Setting the Scene

This thesis investigates the classroom practices of teachers working within the Scottish education system. The study focuses on the secondary school context and, as will be explained in a later section of this chapter, the participant teachers were working with pupils from 12-15 years. Teachers working within the subject area of physical education¹ were recruited to participate in the research study. While the research reported in this thesis concerns itself with scenes from physical education classrooms², I would argue that the actions of participant teachers and the challenges they face in their day-to-day practice, could apply to teachers working in other subject areas. Therefore, this section will first present an overview of the Scottish education policy context and then review existing research conducted within Scottish physical education settings.

1.2.1 The Scottish policy context

The study takes place after a period of significant curriculum and policy development within Scottish education. In 1999, the newly devolved Scottish Government (then Executive) initiated a major review of the education system. This review led to the following chain of developments that re-shaped the national educational landscape:

- The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 was passed;

¹ The term 'physical education' is used in this thesis and refers to the planned learning experiences through sport and forms of physical activity that occur during the school day.

² Recognising the possibility for the findings of this study to contribute to wider subject areas, I adopt the term 'classroom' throughout this thesis to acknowledge the spaces where physical education takes place – games halls, gymnasiums, swimming pools, fitness suites, and sports fields – as classrooms. These 'classrooms' are the spaces where learning experiences in physical education take place in school settings, albeit these are a slightly different, constantly changing form of classroom in comparison to the conventional use of this term.

- National Priorities for Education were established in 2002;
- A ‘national debate’ on education commenced in 2002 (Scottish Executive, 2002; Munn *et al.*, 2004);
- Curriculum Review Groups were convened in 2003 with the aim of re-thinking the school curriculum (Scottish Executive, 2004a; b).

The ‘upshot’ of these developments outlined an educational vision for Scotland and resulted in the creation of a new curriculum framework: Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) (Scottish Government, 2009). Generally, the main aims of education policy renewal were to “de-clutter” the curriculum and reform assessment procedures, place the child at the centre of the learning process, and encourage a more interactive approach between teacher and pupils (Scottish Executive, 2004a).

These CfE guidelines superseded all former curriculum guidelines, providing an all-through, three-to-18 curriculum experience (Priestley, 2013). The understanding is that this experience will create a more coherent, streamlined education system with smoother transitions between the three main levels of schooling: preschool, primary school, and secondary school. In secondary education, where this present study takes place, pupils are expected to receive a ‘broad and general’ educational experience in S1 – S3 (pupils aged 12 years – 15 years) before working towards national qualifications with high stakes examinations in S4 – S6 (pupils aged 15 years – 18 years). More specifically, within the ‘broad and general’ stage of schooling for S1-S3 pupils, policy guidelines advocate:

...teachers will have greater scope and space for professional decisions about what and how they should teach... (Scottish Executive, 2006, p. 1).

As the current study is concerned with investigating teachers’ actions in the classroom, this broad and general educational experience in S1 – S3 appears to be a site where teachers have more opportunity to express their own personal preferences in relation to their practice.

While the overarching aims and expectations of these curriculum guidelines have not been consistently expressed in supporting documentation (Priestley, 2013; Priestley and Humes, 2010), one clearly communicated message was the need for a (re)examination of current practice and a shift in teachers' thinking about education. This proposed shift in practice aims to encourage teachers to (re)consider their role in the learning process and move beyond the simple transmission of knowledge to pupils. Instead, teachers are the facilitators of each pupil's understanding in the classroom with the aim being that pupils acquire the skills and attitudes to access learning in school settings and later in their adult life (HMIE, 2006; 2008). By fostering greater responsibility, independence, collaboration, and an interactive learning environment, the intention is to develop the four holistic capacities of CfE: successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors (Scottish Executive, 2004a).

In sum, within current CfE guidelines in Scotland, there appears to be a relative degree of professional freedom granted to teachers alongside the expectation for learning experiences in classes to shift towards more interactive and learner-centred approaches (Priestley, 2013; Priestley and Humes, 2010). As I will explain later, this study does not intend to compare and contrast teachers' practice with the recommendations presented in CfE policy guidelines. The aim is to investigate teachers' day-to-day actions as they work with pupils in school settings. Providing this overview of current policy serves to highlight the expectations placed upon teachers in the Scottish context. However, as revealed later in this thesis, teachers may not always implement straightforwardly the aspirations of education policy in their school settings. For instance, Chapter 6 demonstrates there are certain situations that 'override' a teacher's ability to work in interactive and learner-centred ways with pupils at all times. Therefore, in researching teachers' practice, this study not only provides insight into the realities of classroom life, but also examines participant teachers' construal of these policy guidelines in relation to their day-to-day practice.

1.2.2 *Physical Education in Scotland*

As this study focused on physical education teachers, it is important to examine briefly Scottish research within this subject area. As part of the educational reform process highlighted in preceding paragraphs, Scottish physical education has experienced a significant shift in emphasis and was relocated within the ‘Health and Wellbeing’ curriculum area. Reflecting on the Scottish physical education research literature over the past decade, reveals the shift towards ‘Health and Wellbeing’ has provided a rich seam of policy-related research opportunities (Gray, Mulholland and MacLean, 2012; Gray, MacLean and Mulholland, 2012; Horrell, Sproule and Gray, 2012; Thorburn, 2007; Thorburn, Jess and Atencio, 2009; Jess, Atencio and Thorburn, 2011; Thorburn, Jess and Atencio, 2011; Thorburn and Horrell, 2011).

Beyond these policy-related studies, there are many empirical studies that have investigated physical education within school settings; that is, studies that have generated data related to teachers’ practice and/or pupils’ experiences in physical education³. However, there has been a marked lack of direct observational studies in classrooms. Only Thorburn, Carse, Jess and Atencio (2011) used observations to understand teachers’ practice and this was in a primary school context with generalist classroom teachers. Thus, there appear to be *no* studies that have observed secondary physical education teachers’ practice in the Scottish context. Chapter 2 will reveal there is also a distinct lack of fine-grained observational research studies across the international education and physical education research literature in recent years. Thus, addressing this ‘gap’ in the Scottish context could provide an empirical account of teachers’ practices holding much value for the international research literature.

Given that there are limited empirical studies into Scottish teachers’ practice, quite how secondary teachers are practising in physical education settings is unclear. A

³ See the following studies: MacPhail, 2000, 2002, 2007; Thorburn and Collins, 2003, 2006; Gray and colleagues, 2008, 2009, 2011; Thorburn, 2011; Mitchell *et al.*, 2015; Johnson *et al.*, 2013).

number of government Reports (HMIE, 2008; Scottish Executive, 2003, 2004b) have provided descriptive overviews of Scottish physical education teachers' practices⁴. However, I am aware of the trap of uncritically interpreting the 'findings' in publications that are linked to educational policy (Scott, 2000). These publications and educational policies are inherently connected and the emphasis is essentially to effect change by steering existing practice in particular directions (Scott, 2000). Nevertheless, the findings in these Scottish Government reports provide insights into secondary teachers' practice and raise some key points for discussion.

The Physical Activity Task Force (Scottish Executive, 2003) indicated some serious shortcomings within physical education in Scotland: an increasing majority of children are becoming "disengaged" from physical education, there is a lack of consistency in the quality of programmes, and an apparent lack of physical education provision as children progress through school. The Review Group in Physical Education (RGPE) (Scottish Executive, 2004b) further investigated these findings⁵. After observations of current practice and consultation with the profession, the RGPE recommended the following:

- participation in physical education should be increased;
- change to the curriculum was needed, and;
- facilities in schools need to be improved.

Crucial for the current study are the limited recommendations for, and the lack of interest in, physical education teachers' classroom practices. In closing their analysis, however, the RGPE called for HMIE to identify "good practice" in terms of teaching, learning and assessment. In response, the HMIE produced a "portrait" of current practice in physical education in Scotland (HMIE, 2008). The following

⁴ The HMIE (2008) report is based upon evidence obtained from inspections of Scottish teachers' practice between 2002 and 2007. The Scottish Executive (2003) publication is based on research literature whilst the Scottish Executive (2004b) report claims to have taken "...evidence from a wide variety of sources, visited schools and spent many hours in robust discussion [between members of the report's committee]..." (p. 3).

⁵ The RGPE used much of the HMIE literature to corroborate their case for change; hence, the need for critical interpretation.

areas emerged in which there was a need for “significant” development in teachers’ practice: promoting “responsibility”; fostering a sense of “independence”; increasing “self-confidence”; providing opportunities for pupils to “collaborate” with others (p. 2). As HMIE believes current practice is not addressing these attributes, one interpretation could be that teachers need to access a wider range of teaching approaches or embrace the type of practices associated with learner-centred approaches (Thorburn and Gray, 2010). Since international research reported in Chapter 2 indicates that physical education teachers have a penchant for ‘direct’ teaching (Bulger and Housner, 2009; Capel, 2007; Cothran and Kulinna, 2008; Curtner-Smith *et al.*, 2001; Hardman and Marshall, 2000, 2005; Kirk, 2010; Kulinna and Cothran, 2003; Pühse and Gerber, 2005) it could be argued that these findings are also reflected in the Scottish context.

1.3 Summary of the Study

Given the unease expressed about existing research in the opening paragraphs of this chapter, the present study looked to remedy these limitations by drawing on insights from the methodological and research methods literature. A prime objective of this study was to avoid reporting details of teachers’ classroom actions in isolation from the influences that inform and shape these practices (Alexander, 1994; LeCompte, 2009). A qualitative, interpretivist perspective underpins the study (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). This research perspective provided flexibility for tracking what happens as teachers work with pupils in school settings while acknowledging the purposes and contextual influences framing these practices.

Two main research methods were used to gather data: observations of lessons in school settings and semi-structured interviews with teachers. These methods were employed during two distinct phases of the research study: the first phase involved visiting classrooms to observe teachers in action with classes and the second phase involved interviewing the teachers once all observations were complete. On the one hand, taking time to observe lessons through a qualitative approach to

observation research was an important step towards understanding teachers' practice in classroom settings (Wragg, 1999). An expectation for this kind of research is that we "use our eyes as well as our ears when doing observational work" (Silverman, 2006a, p. 175). In this sense, observation work provides a fine-grained account of teachers' actions in classrooms together with insights into how various purposes and the context of their work in schools shape these practices. Drawing on the findings from observation research, the aim was to construct a theoretical framework to better understand teachers' classroom practice. On the other hand, semi-structured interviews provided an opportunity to explore this theoretical framework with these teachers in an interactive fashion. It is important to re-state here that interviews took place after completing the observation phase of the research. This decision allowed for information gained from observation fieldwork to inform my interview work and an opportunity to incorporate the participant teachers' views into the theoretical framework.

While drawing upon observation *and* interviews to gather data may seem a fairly routine part of qualitative research, the methodology chapter will explain the ways in which these 'tools' were specifically employed in this study. Indeed, this study could be viewed as employing observation and interview methods in a closely integrated way based on the following two features of the research design. Firstly, these methods were used in a complementary fashion: the initial observation phase of the research informed the later interview phase; the later interview phase of the research provided scope to hone the findings gathered during initial observations. Secondly, these methods were used flexibly by making adaptations to suit the topic under investigation: the focus of data gathering during my observation and interview work was to provide a balance between teachers' actions and the influences shaping their classroom practices. These two features of the research design not only provide insights for bridging the dualism identified in preceding educational research literature, but can be viewed as making valuable contributions to the existing methodological literature.

1.4 Reading this Thesis

This thesis is structured using a conventional format and is comprised of seven main chapters. This first, introductory chapter has set the scene for the present study: it provided insight into my personal interest in the topic, the significance of this research, background information on the context where the research takes place, and a summary of the research methods used in this study.

In Chapter 2, I undertake a broad ranging review of literature to exemplify the research studies that have informed my thinking and data analysis. In particular, I explore notions of ‘pedagogy’ and justify the role of this concept in guiding the research process of the current study. Thereafter, I review education and physical education traditions of classroom research to highlight the limitations of past studies and provide the current study with theoretical and methodological insights for reconceptualising classroom life.

Chapter 3 provides a detailed account of the methodological stance I adopted and the research methods used to answer the research questions. The level of detail provided in relation to the design of the study – the sampling strategy, how observation and interview methods were employed to gather data, my position and background as a research, the approach to data analysis, and my commitment to ethical research practices – should provide the reader with a sufficient information to judge the quality of this research study.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 present the main findings of this thesis. Chapter 4 begins with an overview of the theoretical framework derived from observation and interview data and a brief examination of the two main elements of this framework. It then considers one of these main elements, the five framing categories, in more detail to provide insights into the key features of participant teachers’ classroom practice. Chapter 5 examines the other main element of the theoretical framework, the ‘teacher-pupil power dynamic’ – to demonstrate how the participant teachers employ a broad range of these categories by ‘fine-tuning’ practice in advance of

lessons, ‘responding’ in situations in the immediate act of teaching, and ‘negotiating and controlling’ the goals and learning intentions with pupils in their classes. Chapter 6 continues to elaborate the ‘teacher-pupil power dynamic’ element, providing insights into teacher-pupil relationships and the ways in which these relations inform the decisions teachers make about their classroom practice.

Chapter 7 uses seven key themes as an organising device to draw a considerable number of findings together and reflect on what we can learn from a study of this nature. These key themes provide opportunities to compare and contrast the findings of this study with existing research literature, while pointing out recommendations for future research and practice.

Chapter 2 – Review of Literature

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this study is to provide a ‘fresh’ interpretation of teachers’ day-to-day actions as they interact with pupils in school classrooms. Central to achieving this aim is a commitment to adopting a broad investigative stance during the research process and sketching out a conceptual framework for understanding classroom interaction. A key concern is to develop a framework that simultaneously captures teachers’ actions in the classroom and acknowledges the various influences that inform and shape these practices. The review of relevant literature in this current chapter has the traditional purpose of contextualising the present study in relation to previous research and of identifying areas where the findings may contribute to existing understanding. However, given the broad investigative scope of this study, it would not be possible for this review to include an exposition of *every* relevant study in the existing body of educational research. Rather, to provide a broad overview, this chapter has selected research studies to highlight a range of key issues concerning classroom practice. I employed the following criteria to identify appropriate studies for this review:

- studies and theoretical constructs that have significantly shaped conceptualisations of teachers’ practice in school settings;
- studies where researchers have made substantive efforts to make connections between teachers’ actions *and* the various immediate and wider influences on their practice.

With these criteria in mind, the present chapter is structured into four main sections. The first section provides a clear rationale for my decision to employ the term ‘pedagogy’ to guide the research process. Having acknowledged the inherent difficulties associated with this term, this section will argue a focus on pedagogy provides insights that could enhance existing conceptualisations of teachers’ practice in contemporary education literature. The second, related section centres

on the work of Robin Alexander (2008a, b), as his definition of pedagogy aims to connect teachers' actions *with* the local and wider influences that underpin and inform their practice. It identifies the ways in which his definition has informed the present study, but it also serves to illustrate the need to extend his ideas, particularly in relation to teacher-pupil interaction.

The majority of the third section examines a particular form of classroom research that emerged in the late 1960s, flourished throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, before virtually disappearing from the research landscape (Atkinson and Housley, 2003). Drawing largely, but not exclusively, on 'symbolic interactionism' a small number of researchers within the 'sociology of education' movement in Britain made concerted efforts to connect the micro level actions of teachers and pupils in the classroom to the macro level structures of society (Atkinson, Coffey and Delamont, 2003). Generally, these researchers used participant observation techniques to paint a picture of classroom life as a site of conflict predicated upon 'power' struggles and the need for constant 'negotiation' between the teacher and pupil(s) (Wragg, 1999). Revisiting these interactionist studies reveals a contrasting view of classroom life in comparison to the unproblematic assumptions advanced in the majority of contemporary research literature. This 'mismatch' between these earlier studies and current studies of classroom reality points up the need to re-examine classroom life, with these interactionist research studies offering the methodological tools for doing so.

The final section of this chapter turns to the physical education literature, given that the teachers participating in the present study were drawn from this subject area. This section will reveal a need to re-examine learning and teaching in physical education to challenge the dominance of a conceptual framework called the 'Spectrum of Teaching Styles' (Mosston, 1966). While Mosston's (1966) original framework and its subsequent elaborations (Mosston, 1972, 1981; Mosston and Ashworth, 2002) provide a helpful way for teachers and researchers to think about teaching, alternate conceptualisations have never managed to supersede this framework (Metzler, 1985; Sicilia-Camacho and Brown, 2008;

Tinning, 2010), despite claims that research findings have failed to explore the complexities of day-to-day practice in physical education (Rovegno, 2009). An examination of this literature reveals that few studies have provided a naturalistic account of classroom life, where researchers document the practices that teachers themselves initiate and sustain in their school contexts (Rovegno, 2009), revealing the potential for my study to supplement current conceptions of teaching in physical education.

I now turn to the first task of this review of literature and provide a rationale for selecting the term ‘pedagogy’ to guide the research process.

2.2 Exploring Pedagogy

2.2.1 Why pedagogy?

There has been a “proliferation” in the use of the term ‘pedagogy’ in the field of education in recent years (Thiessen, *et al.*, 2013). Despite the ubiquity of this term, there are on-going debates about whether or not deploying the term pedagogy is a positive development for the field of education (Cannon, 2001; Hinchliffe, 2001; Stones, 2000; Yates, 2009). Over and above the claims that pedagogy is an “ugly word” (Lusted, 1986), fraught with “academic pretentiousness” (Yates, 2009), and therefore little used by teachers working in school settings (Waring and Evans, 2015; Watkins and Mortimore, 1999; Yates, 2009), much of the unease is connected to the ways in which various definitions have evolved over time.

Pedagogy has emerged in the educational literature at *different* times (Hamilton, 2009, 1999), in *different* countries (Alexander, 2008a, b) and, more often than not, with *differing* interpretations and agendas for *different* people (Waring and Evans, 2015; Watkins and Mortimer, 1999). Alongside the uneven nature of pedagogy’s conceptual development, where there has been “infrequent use and disregard for...pedagogy within...North America and the UK...” (Waring and Evans, 2015. p. 27), two further issues have contributed to unease within the field of education.

Firstly, efforts to exemplify the meaning of pedagogy have required the ever-increasing use of “complex ideas” (Watkins and Mortimore, 1999); subsequent definitions have tended to go beyond straightforward explanations, often proposing many competing and contradictory directions for the field of education (Thiessen *et al.*, 2013). Secondly, to compound the problem, educational ideas do not simply “migrate” (Alexander, 2001b) from one country to another and, as a consequence of cross-cultural variations in language use, the study of pedagogy in an international context has quite literally become “blurred in translation” (Hamilton, 2009).

Taken together, these two issues – complex ideas that are blurred in translation – have contributed to many professionals within the field of education becoming “frustrated by this conceptual fog” (Stones, 2000, p. 94). Indeed, this frustration sparked widespread “coyness” (Stones, 2000) in the education literature whereby authors have increasingly refrained from expressing exactly what they have in mind when deploying the term pedagogy in their publications. Actively challenging these under-defined and ill-explained notions of pedagogy, Stones (2000) argues we have a current “fashionable usage” of the term, which is “as rigorous as a jellyfish” (p. 94). More recently, Thiessen *et al.* (2013) similarly note the “interchangeability” of pedagogy in the literature with terms such as ‘learning’, ‘teaching’, and ‘instruction’, with this pattern further intensifying during the recent “proliferation”.

Given the criticism levied against pedagogy in preceding paragraphs, it is important to provide a robust rationale for my decision to make explicit use of this term in this thesis. Notwithstanding these critical accounts, the possibility of pedagogy providing a “bigger picture” (Alexander, 2008a, p. 1) interpretation of *teaching* was the key attribute that secured its inclusion in the present study. According to Alexander (2008a), ‘*teaching*’ and ‘*pedagogy*’ are often used interchangeably in the educational literature, but there are fundamental differences between these terms. Alexander (2008a) separates ‘teaching’ from ‘pedagogy’ in the following way:

...teaching is an *act* while pedagogy is both act and *discourse*. Pedagogy encompasses the performance of teaching together with the theories, beliefs, policies and controversies that inform and shape it (p. 1, original emphasis).

This quotation suggests that pedagogy transforms teachers' classroom practice into a highly informed and thoughtfully driven process. This insight that pedagogy has the potential to provide a "*bigger picture*" interpretation of teachers' practice was crucial for the current study. This study set out to present a 'fresh' interpretation of classroom practice and pedagogy provided a means to achieve this objective by directly addressing a major gap within the existing research literature.

This gap is the perceived problem with the ways in which researchers have investigated teachers' classroom practices. Reviewing international trends in research on teaching, LeCompte (2009) highlights a distinct dualism between research *in* education and research *on* schools and educational phenomena more generally. LeCompte summarises this trend in the following way:

The former [research in education] is focused primarily on the acts of teaching and learning by teachers and students; its context is *narrowly construed* as the classroom itself. The latter [research on schools] examines the *overall context* of teaching and learning, from local social, political, and economic influences on the school and classroom, to macro-structural forces affecting the purposes and directions of school systems (pp. 25-26, emphasis added).

There are distinct commonalities between the general education research literature and the specific physical education literature. For instance, Lee (2003) identifies a similar trend to LeCompte (2009): physical education research literature has either used a "narrow" lens to investigate a "particular component of the teaching-learning setting", or a "wider angle" lens to understand "...the significance of social, cultural, political influences [and]... questions of social justice and power relations of gender and race..." (p. 9). While many positive contributions to knowledge may have emerged from research conducted in this dualistic fashion, I

am concerned with the potentially negative consequences of reporting teachers' classroom practice in this way.

Over 20 years ago, Alexander (1994) issued the following advice to educational researchers interested in investigating teachers' classroom practice:

To make sense of what we see [as a researcher in the classroom] we need to encounter the educational ideas and assumptions in which the observable practice is grounded. Without them practice is mindless, purposeless and random... (p. 17).

Alexander (1994) clearly is *not* positing teaching, and the work of teachers, to be “mindless, purposeless and random” pursuits, but rather educational researchers can portray teaching as highly technical and devoid of theoretical insight by ignoring the “educational ideas and assumptions” that shape classroom practice. In many respects, Alexander (1994) was urging researchers to bridge the divide between teachers' classroom practices and the purposes and reasons that frame these actions. However, according to both LeCompte (2009) and Lee (2003), it appears educational researchers have largely ignored this advice.

Contemporary accounts of classroom practice tend to reflect only one-half of this divide (LeCompte, 2009; Lee, 2003); this involves either reporting teachers' actions and overlooking purposes and contextual influences, or reporting the purposes and contextual influences and foregoing the details of classroom actions. Therefore, these findings present a doubly incomplete picture of classroom practice and mask the potential for teachers' actions and these wider influences to be synergistically connected (Alexander, 1994).

This gap though needs to be viewed against the challenges of researching educational phenomena. LeCompte (2009) notes the highly demanding nature of educational research and accordingly argues that:

Teaching and learning are *complex*, highly *diverse*, and frequently *individualistic* phenomena...investigating them requires insights from

multiple disciplines using multiple kinds of research designs...researchers must thoroughly explore their internal and external characteristics currently, over time, in multiple settings, and with different kinds of teachers and learners (p. 25, emphasis added).

Given the challenges faced by researchers it may not be possible to comprehend fully the complexity at play in educational settings. Researchers are grappling with possible ways to apprehend the sheer complexity and level of understanding recognised above by LeCompte (2009). Writing in the physical education literature, Ovens, Hopper and Butler (2013) recognise a similar, but slightly different, challenge for educational researchers. Rather than perceiving educational phenomena and school settings as complex *per se*, Ovens *et al.* (2013) explain:

...complexity has always confronted those working in physical education. The issue is not that educational phenomena are complex, but about the appropriateness of the frameworks we use to make sense of the 'messiness' that is inherent in complex educational settings (p. 1).

In other words, researchers are employing the existing theoretical and methodological frameworks available to them, but these 'tools' are too underdeveloped at present and they are therefore struggling to cope with the inherently 'messy' nature of educational settings. Thus, according to the perspectives offered by LeCompte (2009) and Ovens *et al.* (2013), researchers may not have necessarily ignored the advice offered by Alexander (1994) but rather they are battling against the odds to provide an interpretative rendering of the educational phenomena under investigation.

Furthermore, wrapped around these on-going research efforts, is a political reality that has heavily circumscribed the possibilities of apprehending a detailed level of understanding in educational settings (Alexander, 2001a, 2008a, b; Ball, 2003, 2008; Biesta, 2009; Biesta and Miedema, 2002; Le Fevre, Timperley and Ell, 2016; Lingard, Ladwig and Luke, 1998; Luke, 2002). Ball (2003) explains that since the 1970s there has been a "radical change" in education across the developed world. An increasing level of government interest in education has been

realised via “[a]n unstable, uneven but apparently unstoppable flood of closely inter-related reform ideas...” (Ball, 2003, p. 215). These reform ideas have closely aligned with neo-liberal thinking (Steger and Roy, 2000), geared towards raising educational standards and increasing teacher accountability in a direct effort for countries to remain competitive within more globalised economic and labour markets (Alexander, 2001a; Ball, 2003, 2008; Biesta, 2009; Biesta and Miedema, 2002; Le Fevre *et al.*, 2016; Lingard *et al.*, 1998; Luke, 2002). Writing in the physical education literature, Tinning (2009) similarly recognises this neo-liberal ‘turn’ as presenting a number of “dilemmas” for the profession. Policy makers have subsequently focused research grants on identifying educational practices that have “universal application” in an effort to “achieve results” (Watkins and Mortimore, 1999, p. 14). These conditions have steered researchers to identify “quick fixes” and “short term solutions” to highly complex educational problems and this neoliberal agenda has exacerbated the dualism in existing research literature (LeCompte, 2009, p. 25).

The term pedagogy is appropriate in this study, therefore, because a “bigger picture” (Alexander, 2008a) interpretation seeks to avoid the pitfalls described in preceding paragraphs. Pedagogy enabled the present study to approach the research process from a completely different perspective. This study aimed to directly engage the complexities within educational settings and strike *a balance* between classroom actions and the purposes and contextual influences that inform these practices. In the subsequent methodology chapter, recognising that pedagogy offers the potential for a ‘fresh’ interpretation of teachers’ classroom practice, I further explain the ways in which this term guided the practices of data collection and analysis.

2.2.2 *Who has the ‘real’ pedagogy?*

The preceding section acknowledged a “proliferation” in the use of the term pedagogy in recent times (Thiessen *et al.*, 2013). With various, often competing, interpretations of pedagogy in the education literature (Hamilton, 2009), readers of

this thesis may be inclined to ask, “Who has the ‘real’ pedagogy”? I recognise it is problematic to define pedagogy fixedly with one all-embracing definition because it has progressed in so many different and overlapping directions. I also question what would be gained from a single, unifying definition, as it would prove too simplistic and restrictive to capture the complexity at play across diverse educational settings. Therefore, while this section will refrain from revealing a ‘real’ pedagogy, it will start to consider if some definitions are highly profitable for the specific demands of this research study. The discussion is taken up again in the final chapter of this thesis which returns to the insights about pedagogy presented in this section and revises existing definitions by incorporating the central findings gained from this current study.

The term pedagogy appears to be what Gallie (1956) has called an “essentially contested concept” (p. 167); that is, a concept:

...[where no individual definition] *need* be the correct one...although not resolvable by argument of any kind, [these definitions] are nevertheless sustained by...argument and evidence. This is what I mean by saying that there are concepts which are essentially contested...which inevitably involves endless disputes about...[the] proper use on the part of their users (p. 169, original emphasis).

Gallie’s quotation suggests that there may be space for multiple and diverse interpretations of some concepts, such as pedagogy in the existing education literature, provided these are underpinned with robust “argument and evidence”. Therefore, I will return to Gallie’s (1956) ideas at a later point in this chapter where, given the contestation, I present a rationale for adopting a particular interpretation of pedagogy.

Waring and Evans (2015) explain that existing knowledge paradigms in the social sciences have influenced conceptual orientations towards understanding pedagogy; namely, the positivist, interpretivist, and critical paradigms. This three-dimensional framework is a fruitful way to represent the distinctions between different conceptual orientations to pedagogy. Following Waring and Evans’

(2015) lead, the next section will present three pedagogical ‘camps’ similar to their positivist, interpretivist, and critical paradigm distinctions, which I will respectively term the ‘fixed camp’, ‘fluid camp’ and ‘transformative camp’⁶. This review is required to draw broad distinctions between different conceptualisations of pedagogy and identify the potential for one of these ‘camps’ to help address the concerns raised by the present study.

2.2.3 *Setting out three pedagogical ‘camps’: the ‘fixed’, ‘fluid’, and ‘transformative’*

Before setting out these three ‘camps’ it is important to first provide a brief overview of the origins of the term pedagogy and some related developments. This overview is *not* an in-depth historical account, but rather a recognition of key developments that will enable us to trace pedagogy’s progress into these three different ‘camps’.

The term pedagogy has its roots in ancient Greek society (c. 550 B.C.) and appears to have originated from various derivatives of the classical Greek word ‘paidagogas’: a combination of the words for ‘boy’ and ‘leader’ based on the notion of a man (the household servant) having responsibility for a child’s education and upbringing (Hamilton, 2009; Leach and Moon, 2008; Watkins and Mortimore, 1999). Various French and Latin interpretations of these Greek words eventually arrived at the term ‘pedagogy’ (Watkins and Mortimore, 1999). Hamilton (2009) explains that, in original Greek interpretations of pedagogy, these ‘teachers’ (or pedagogues) tended to work in one-to-one situations and were not only interested in *learning* in a narrow sense, but they were also concerned with engaging wider *educational* agendas regarding the child’s social, cultural, and moral development. Biesta and Miedema (2002) recognise this original form of

⁶ I am not arguing that the divisions between these ‘camps’ can be clearly demarcated or that every definition of pedagogy can be neatly placed into one and only one of these ‘camps’.

pedagogy as education in “*a wider sense*” and that the interest was with the “*cultivation of the person*” (p. 173, emphasis added).

Drawing out a chain of developments between the 12th and 18th centuries, where parts of mainland Europe and other countries were providing increasing levels of formal schooling opportunities, Hamilton (1999) traces the progressive “separation” of pedagogy from its original Greek interpretation. The on-going organisation and development of ‘schools’ at this time, (while predating the introduction of mass schooling in the second half of the 19th century), led to the crucial “...separation of the activity of ‘teaching’ from the activity of defining ‘that which is taught’ (Hamilton, 1999, p. 139). In other words, with a progressive rise in class sizes and diverse student populations, these ‘teachers’ inevitably had to make decisions about *what* should be included in lessons and *how* this knowledge could be taught in the most efficient way (Hamilton, 1999).

The upshot of this “separation” triggered significant interest in the “activity of ‘teaching’” and concerns about *what* and *how* to teach steadily became entwined with notions of pedagogy (Hamilton, 1999, p. 139). An interplay of these ideas, initially within Europe and then more widely, contributed to the conceptual development of pedagogy into three distinct conceptual ‘camps’. I now set out these three conceptual orientations, starting with the ‘fixed camp’.

2.2.3.1 Pedagogy: the ‘fixed camp’

Definitions of pedagogy often suggest it is “the ‘science of teaching’” (Simon, 1985, p. 77). Tracking the notion of pedagogy as a science, reveals the extent to which this conceptual orientation has endured over time (Hamilton, 1999).

Scholars pursued the act of teaching in a particular way in the European context from around the 17th century onwards (Hamilton, 1999, 2009; Simon, 1985, 1994). While these European debates specifically retained the term ‘pedagogy’ for discussing wider educational matters (i.e., regarding the nature and purpose of education), the term ‘didactics’ was used to discuss ‘instruction’ and ‘method’

with a particular emphasis on the delivery of content knowledge in ‘school’ settings. For example, the initial work of Comenius (1648 later translated into English in 1907) entitled ‘The Great Didactic’ and the subsequent work of Herbart (1806 later translated into English in 1892) entitled ‘The Science of Education’ set out to capture the principles for a general theory of teaching. However, use of the term ‘pedagogy’ in these European countries started to be directly associated with the practices of *school* settings (Davis, 2004; Hamilton, 1999, 2009).

Recognising the term pedagogy’s lack of historical grounding in the British context, Simon (1985) argued for general principles of teaching similar to the ‘didactic’ tradition developed in Europe to drive educational thinking and practice in school settings. He identified “...‘pedagogy’...the ‘science of teaching’” as *the* way to accomplish this proposition (p. 77). Importantly, in Simon’s (1985) work, there is almost a straightforward substitution of didactic thinking for pedagogy and this distinction tends to reflect the way in which the term pedagogy was adopted in the British context in the mid-to-late 20th century (Hamilton, 1999).

These ‘fixed camp’ interpretations have endured despite concerns that pedagogy as a ‘science’ confines the act of teaching to a formulaic or linear process independent of prevailing social and cultural contexts (Watkins and Mortimore, 1999). Waring and Evans (2015) observe that “...the common interpretation of ‘science’ is that allied to a positivist paradigm...it negates any notion of consciousness on the part of the teacher or learner” (p. 27). Therefore, this ‘fixed’ interpretation of pedagogy would be wholly inappropriate as a guide for the present study given my interest in trying to unravel some of the complexities that LeCompte (2009) identified in teachers’ day-to-day practice.

2.2.3.2 *Pedagogy: the ‘fluid camp’*

The instrumental logic that had long dominated ‘didactics’ and the subsequent ‘fixed’ interpretations of pedagogy were increasingly critiqued from the late 19th century onwards in European contexts (Hamilton, 1999). Meantime, the

translation of key educational texts into English in the mid-20th century – such as Paulo Freire’s ‘Pedagogy of the Oppressed’ (1971) – brought the term ‘pedagogy’ to wider Anglo-American awareness. These developments invited multiple streams of research to explore the term ‘pedagogy’. Watkins and Mortimore (1999) identify three main streams of interest that individually started to recognise “the complexity of pedagogical activity” (p. 1):

1. The influence of different teachers and teaching;
2. The importance of the context where education takes place;
3. The diversity of learners and learning.

A salient development for the ‘fluid camp’ arrived when scholars, such as Alexander (2001a, b; 2004; 2008a, b), started to advance definitions of pedagogy that recognised the dynamic interplay within and between (and in some cases beyond) the ideas set out in the three main streams of research. Correspondingly, in the physical education research literature, Armour (2011) advances a similar interpretation of pedagogy to that of Alexander. She recognises the “multi-layered” nature of the term pedagogy through the interplay between teachers and teaching, learners and learning, and knowledge in, and of, the context where education takes place. From such a perspective, Waring and Evans (2015) note that:

...if one were to consider science from an interpretive perspective...as socially constructed, creative, uncertain...compared to a positivist perspective...the interpretations offered [of pedagogy] would be opposing (p. 27).

In general terms, I concur with Waring and Evans (2015) and recognise the potential for the ‘fluid camp’ to paint a more “constructed, creative, [and] uncertain” picture of classroom practice that transcends a view of teachers as simply deploying a set of general teaching principles in any or all situations. These ‘fluid’ conceptualisations of pedagogy, where teachers’ actions potentially enmesh with many local and wider discourses and contextual influences, were crucial for

the present study. Indeed, the work of Alexander (2001a, b; 2004; 2008a, b) was a major catalyst and provided a means to start bridging the gap identified in the existing research literature.

I return to the ‘fluid camp’ shortly where the work of Alexander and his definition of pedagogy are explored in more detail, but first it is important to finish this conceptual overview by presenting ideas from the ‘transformative camp’.

2.2.3.3 Pedagogy: the ‘transformative camp’

The translation of Paulo Freire’s ‘Pedagogy of the Oppressed’ (1971) not only brought the term ‘pedagogy’ to wider Anglo-American awareness, but it also ignited interest in the extent to which prevailing political and cultural contexts inform the many decisions that are made in educational settings (Hamilton, 1999; Waring and Evans, 2015). Another landmark text at this time was Basil Bernstein’s (1971) ‘On the Classification and Framing of Educational Knowledge’ which featured an exposition of the connections between education and politics. Coinciding with this increased interest in the politics of education and in “radical change” (Ball, 2003), the combination of Freire (1971) and Bernstein (1971) spawned decades of research using the term ‘pedagogy’ to uncover and transform the apparent (re)production of knowledge in educational settings (Hamilton, 1999).

Writing in the physical education literature, Tinning (2008, 2010) arrives at the conclusion that pedagogy is concerned with the (re)production of knowledge, values, attitudes, dispositions, subjectivities, and identities associated with teaching practices. More specifically, Tinning’s concept of “pedagogical work” (Kirk and Tinning, 1992; Tinning, 2008, 2010) exemplifies his place in the transformative camp. He defines this concept in the following way to highlight the interrelated nature of curriculum and instruction:

It [pedagogical work] is the result of pedagogy...the purpose of which is to pass on or produce knowledge, the idea of purpose or intention is important...It is not concerned with what particular pedagogical practices are said to do, but rather is concerned with what knowledge(s), ways of thinking, dispositions and subjectivities are actually (re)produced in/through particular pedagogical encounters (Tinning, 2010, pp. 18-19).

The “intention” of pedagogical practices and the “purpose” of knowledge are key terms in transformative interpretations of pedagogy. Foregrounding these terms – intentionality and purpose – leads us to not only question the agenda of those individuals endowed with the power to make decisions in educational settings, but also to challenge the ways in which these decisions can privilege some individuals and ostracise others. Thus, Waring and Evans (2015) explain that the ‘transformative camp’ is:

...not a neutral landscape – it is very much about a socially critical agenda...framed by those power relationships that revolve around how knowledge is conceptualized and therefore what knowledge is valued, and how learners are positioned in relation to how that knowledge is created as part of the pedagogical process (p. 27).

For myself, I can see the merit in the ‘transformative camp’ and recognise that there is further research required in education (Waring and Evans, 2015) and physical education (Tinning, 2008, 2010) settings to transform the status quo and promote a more equitable and democratic society. However, I return to Gallie’s (1956) point about “essentially contested concepts” and argue that a *radically* transformative agenda is beyond the scope of the current study.

While not radically transformative, my interpretation of Alexander’s definition of pedagogy is that it provides sufficient latitude to acknowledge the political ideologies embedded within educational settings. Moreover, given the major gap uncovered in preceding sections of this chapter, I would argue that there is a need to first bridge the divide between teachers’ actions and wider influences via a ‘fluid camp’ interpretation and then move on to pursue a transformative agenda as part of my future research ventures. Accordingly, in the section that follows, I

return to the ‘fluid camp’ and explore the work of Alexander (2001a, b; 2004; 2008a, b) in more detail.

2.3 Robin Alexander on Pedagogy

Robin Alexander has an extensive list of publications stretching three decades on topics such as curriculum policy, pedagogy, classroom research, and initial teacher education. His (2001a) five country, cross-cultural comparison of classroom teaching transformed his interpretation of pedagogy and inspired the definition featuring in many of his subsequent publications. Most influential for the present study are Alexander’s ‘Essays on Pedagogy’ (2008a) and ‘The Quality Imperative and the Problem of Pedagogy’ (2008b). While these publications generally use the same interpretation of pedagogy, I will draw heavily upon Alexander (2008b), as this text contains a much more explicit and in-depth account of his definition.

2.3.1 *Exploring Alexander’s definition*

For Alexander (2008b) pedagogy is:

...the observable act of *teaching* together with its attendant *discourse* of educational theories, values, evidence and justifications. It is what one needs to know, and the skills one needs to command, in order to make and justify the many different kinds of *decisions* of which teaching is constituted (p. 29, emphasis added).

This definition embeds the teacher at the centre of pedagogy; it reveals “teaching” as an “observable act” that involves the teacher making “many different kinds of decisions” by drawing upon a range of discourses and by orchestrating diverse contextual influences in educational settings. Alexander’s use of this type of language is consonant with three key ideas in the education literature.

1. There are similarities to the ideas of “professional knowledge” and “professional practice” initially outlined by Hoyle and John (1995); that is, a ‘professional’ is capable of operating in non-routine and unpredictable

environments by employing his or her judgement in a given situation to decide on the best course of action.

2. There are connections to the “reflective” ways in which teachers think and act (Pollard, 2002; Schön, 1983, 1991; Tarrant, 2013; Tsangaridou and O’Sullivan, 2003); that is, through reflection a teacher can challenge his or her own taken-for-granted assumptions over time and bring new ideas to inform classroom actions and events.
3. There is a convergence with research documenting “expert” teachers’ practices in education generally (Sabers, Cushing, and Berliner, 1991) and in the physical education literature (Byra and Sherman, 1993; Schempp, Tan and McCullick, 2002); that is, ‘expert’ teachers are better at interpreting complex classroom events and responding accordingly in comparison to ‘novice’ teachers. ‘Expert’ teachers are more capable of responding in the immediate act of teaching as they have a repertoire of accumulated actions, explanations, examples, and demonstrations that they can deploy in different classroom situations (Borko and Livingston, 1989). More recently, distinctions have been made between “adaptive expertise” and “routine expertise” (Earl and Timperley, 2014; Le Fevre *et al.*, 2016; Timperley, 2011). Adaptive experts “continually expand the breadth and depth of their expertise and are tuned into situations...[adaptive experts have] the capability to identify when known routines do not work and to seek new information about different approaches when needed” (Timperley, 2011, p. 12). The preceding work of Entwistle and Walker (2001), albeit in the context of higher education, concurs with Timperley and posits that teachers can develop what they termed “strategic alertness”. In simple terms, ‘strategic alertness’ relates to the teacher’s ability to exploit “chance events” with classes to create “springboards to significant learning” (p. 357).

On initially reading Alexander’s definition, one striking feature is the limited recognition of the *learner(s)* as an integral part of this process. This stance contrasts with many definitions of pedagogy in the educational literature where,

influenced by contemporary theories of learning, a very prominent place is given to learners and a less prominent role for the *teachers* (Biesta, 2012). In fact, the limited recognition of the learner in Alexander's definition was the source of my own initial resistance to his work. However, as we will see in following paragraphs, in elaborating his ideas about pedagogy, Alexander (2008b) identifies 'learners' and 'learning' as part of the "attendant discourse" underpinning his definition.

Two inter-related frameworks explicate Alexander's (2008b) definition of pedagogy: "pedagogy as ideas" (p. 29) and "pedagogy as practice" (p. 30). These frameworks support his definition and provide a transparent account of the assumptions he is making in relation to pedagogy. Summarising these two frameworks in subsequent paragraphs will not only provide the reader with a more complete account of Alexander's work, but also minimise the possibility of any misguided critiques based on an initial reading of his definition.

In the first of these frameworks, "pedagogy as practice", Alexander (2008b) directly speaks to the "act of teaching" part of his definition. He reveals two central assumptions:

1. "Teaching, in any setting, is the act of using method X to enable students to achieve Y" (p. 30);
2. "Teaching has structure and form; it is situated in, and governed by, space, time and patterns of pupil organisation; and it is undertaken for a purpose" (p. 31).

Looking at the second of these frameworks, "pedagogy as ideas", Alexander (2008b) clarifies that this specifically addresses the part of his definition that refers to teaching as informed by the "...attendant discourse of educational theories, values, evidence and justifications". Alexander (2008b) appears to employ the term 'discourse' in a similar way to Bilton *et al.* (2002) to infer that an amalgam of ideas, concepts, and assumptions becomes established as 'knowledge' and this provides a frame to guide our decisions and actions in the world. This

overarching definition of ‘discourse’ provides a productive way of capturing the diverse and inter-related influences that inform teachers’ practice, which this study looks to address in Chapters 5 and 6.

Alexander (2008b) identifies the following “ideas” at the core of his definition of pedagogy: ‘children’, ‘learning’, ‘teaching’, and ‘curriculum’. However, he is quick to recognise that three distinct contextual levels simultaneously shape and constrain attendant discourse: the ‘self’ and classroom level, the school and policy level, the societal and cultural level.

In sum, Alexander (2008a) undergirds his definition of pedagogy with two explicit frameworks; these are summarised in Figure 2-1 as “pedagogy as practice” and “pedagogy as ideas”. Central to fully grasping Alexander’s definition is to recognise the complex interplay that exists within and between these two frameworks, showing not just “...how ideas inform practice...which they do sometimes but not always, and even then in unpredictable ways...but also how the practice in turn shapes the ideas...” (Alexander, 2008b, p. 32).

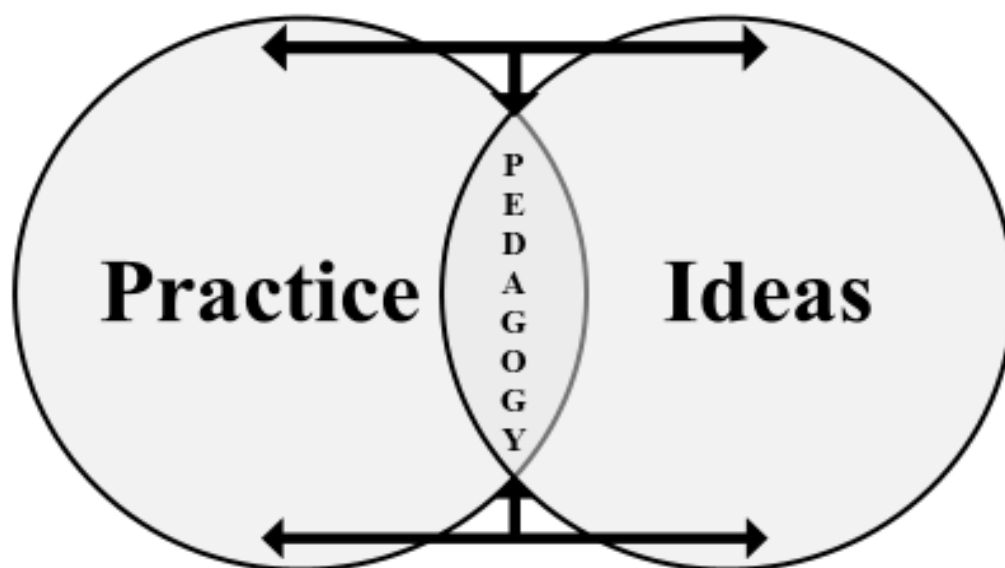


Figure 2-1: My Schematic Overview of Alexander's Definition of Pedagogy

Once I engaged with Alexander's work at a deeper level using these two complementary frameworks, I felt this account of pedagogy resonated with my own personal experiences as a teacher. This complex definition reflected the challenges of working in a busy physical education department and captured the difficulties of 'bringing to life' a diverse range of ideas in my classroom practice. Beyond these personal commitments, there are a number of other strong features of Alexander's (2008a, b) definition of pedagogy.

Firstly, the two complementary frameworks provide a robustness that is absent in the majority of existing education literature (Stones, 2000; Thiessen *et al.*, 2013). Secondly, these two frameworks – "pedagogy as practice" and "pedagogy as ideas" – each correspond to a different half of the 'dualism' identified in the research literature by LeCompte (2009) and Lee (2003). Taken together they appear to bridge this gap by acknowledging the complex and inherently messy nature of teachers' classroom practice. Finally, recognising that 'ideas-inform-practice-and-practice-informs-ideas' (Alexander, 2008b) exemplifies the synergies between these two frameworks and this transforms teachers' classroom practice from a technical pursuit into a more dynamic and thoughtfully driven process.

The next section will discuss the first of Alexander's (2008b) frameworks – "pedagogy as practice" – in more detail. Further discussion of this framework seems important, as one possible interpretation by those unfamiliar with Alexander's work, could be that he presents a relatively simple and straightforward account of classroom practice.

2.3.2 A possible misinterpretation of Alexander's definition

It has been noted (p. 30) that Alexander's (2008b) "pedagogy as practice" framework makes two central assumptions about teachers' classroom practice. Alexander (2008b) delineates these two assumptions by discussing them as 'act', 'form', and 'frame'. The 'act' of teaching is linked to his discussions of "method" raised in assumption one, while both 'frame' and 'form' coalesce around the idea

that teaching is structured in different ways across different settings as suggested in assumption two. A brief account of “pedagogy as practice” in relation to ‘act’, ‘form’, and ‘frame’ is presented below to provide further insight into Alexander’s interpretation of classroom practice:

- “Pedagogy as practice” and the ‘act’ of teaching: A teacher’s use of a particular ‘method’ is guided by a range of inter-related concerns such as learning intentions, learning tasks, the activity pursued, the desired interactions, and the teacher’s own judgement of the relevance of learning tasks and activities.
- “Pedagogy as practice” and the ‘frame’ and ‘form’ of teaching: Lessons are ‘framed’ by contextual constraints (time, space, and class organisation) and individual teacher preferences (certain routines, rules, and rituals); lessons are ‘formed’ conceptually and ethically (by larger schemes of work, education policy documents, and societal values).

Despite his elaboration efforts in the immediately preceding passage, where Alexander explains the ‘act’ of teaching involves drawing upon a range of inter-related concerns to decide on the appropriate “method” for a given situation, readers unfamiliar with his work might believe that teachers then *implement* this method in a relatively linear and straightforward way. Therefore, a reader could take particular issue with assumption one where Alexander (2008b) makes the following claim: “Teaching, in any setting, is the act of *using method X* to enable students *to achieve Y*” (p. 30, emphasis added).

It could be possible to interpret this ‘X achieves Y’ perspective as painting a linear and over-simplistic picture of classroom practice on three counts. Firstly, it may suggest that by drawing on a range of inter-related concerns to inform their practice, teachers will be able to find the ‘right’ method to ‘fit’ any classroom situation. Secondly, having selected a particular method, one might infer that all pupils will engage with, rather than actively resist, a teacher’s choice of method and learning activities. Lastly, it could portray ‘learning’ as a uniform process

whereby all pupils will respond to a method in a particular way and therefore progress towards the desired learning outcome in a relatively similar fashion.

The whole point of the present research study was to capture a ‘fresh’ interpretation of teachers’ classroom practice. Rather than trying to underplay the complex nature of classroom life, a key concern was to openly acknowledge it and present a more realistic, albeit ‘messier’, picture to the readers of this thesis. Given my decision to deploy Alexander’s definition of pedagogy, it seems important to guard against any misinterpretations of his work, which could render it unfit for the purposes of this thesis. An initial glance at Alexander’s ‘X achieves Y’ assumption could lead individuals to believe he holds an over-simplistic interpretation of classroom reality, but this is only one *isolated* part of the “bigger picture” (Alexander, 2008b). Accordingly, I would argue that the scope of Alexander’s two complementary frameworks bridging “practice” and “discourse”, alongside his discussions of “pedagogy as practice” in relation to ‘act’, ‘form’, and ‘frame’, provides insights extending beyond straightforward representations of classroom reality.

Having recognised the possibility for misinterpretations of Alexander’s work, the following methodology chapter and later discussion chapter will re-visit and extend his definition of pedagogy. Meantime, the next section of this current chapter presents ideas from a particular form of educational research, where more animated and edgier accounts of classroom life are recognised and these inform my later revisions to Alexander’s work.

2.4 Learning from the Past: Researching ‘Day-to-Day’ Classroom Practice

2.4.1 Theoretical traditions of classroom research

The discussion above revealed the need to explore more animated accounts of classroom life to extend the existing work of Robin Alexander. However, in reviewing the theoretical traditions of classroom research, locating studies that

move beyond an 'X achieves Y' perspective has been challenging. To illustrate, Rex *et al.* (2006) begin a paper entitled 'Researching the Complexities of Classroom Interaction' by acknowledging that:

...because process-product research has dominated...conversations since 1965, research, whether process-product or not, is positioned in relation to that research model. It is either following in process-product's footsteps, or going where that model is unable, or its followers are unwilling, to go (p. 728).

Given the dominance identified by Rex *et al.* (2006), this section first explains what the process-product research model involves before moving on to outline a particular form of classroom research that set out to explore the terrain "where that model is unable, or...unwilling, to go".

Prior to the advent of the process-product model, much educational research from around the 1920s to the 1960s had been interested in forms of 'teacher effectiveness' (Rex *et al.*, 2006; Saha and Dworkin, 2009). In general terms, this research involved studying teachers' personality traits, investigating the challenges faced by teachers in the classroom, and searching for the most effective teaching methods (Rex *et al.*, 2006; Saha and Dworkin, 2009). Much of this early research was later criticised for using "inadequate criteria of effectiveness" (Dunkin and Biddle, 1974, p. 14). Subsequently, educational research became more formalised and structured using the assumptions of a process-product model and this 'breathed new life' into the teacher effectiveness movement (Dunkin and Biddle, 1974).

Based on positivistic notions from the natural sciences, a process-product model sets out to measure objectively and establish causality between two or more research variables. The instrumental rationality (Lefstein, 2005) driving this research movement was that if the key features of effective teaching could be identified then scholars would have the empirical evidence to justify a form of classroom practice that would involve all teachers practising similarly.

A key stream of international educational research investigated the correlation between teaching behaviour (process) and the direct impact on pupils' achievement (product) (Darling-Hammond, 2016; Rex *et al.*, 2006). To take ahead this agenda of directly linking a teacher's actions to pupils' achievement, a number of systematic observation instruments were devised throughout the 1960s and 1970s; these were used to observe and measure objectively behaviour in the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 2016; Rex *et al.*, 2006). The most prominent of these systematic observation instruments was the Flanders System (Flanders, 1970), which recorded a teacher's verbal behaviour at regular intervals by adding a code to the observation schedule to reflect a range of *pre-specified* interaction categories (Delamont, 1983; Delamont and Hamilton, 1976).

Commenting on the physical education literature, Macdonald *et al.* (2002) recognised this process-product research as "...a *powerful* model for the study of teaching..." (p. 136, emphasis added). One major area of process-product research throughout the 1970s and 1980s involved the development of several systematic observation instruments to offer accounts of teachers' practice specific to physical education settings (Darst *et al.*, 1983, 1989). Ward (2006) explains key ideas from the pre-existing behaviour analysis research informed many of these systematic observation techniques, leading to an emphasis on classroom management strategies and the delivery of feedback during lessons in an effort to control pupil behaviour. Lee (2003) identifies Cheffers' (1973) adaptation of the Flanders System and Siedentop *et al.*'s (1982) adaptation of academic learning time as the most frequently cited studies using systematic observation techniques in the physical education research literature.

Another major area of process-product research in physical education has been the investigation of Mosston's (1966) Spectrum of Teaching Styles. While Mosston's teaching styles were originally designed to provide a conceptual framework for *teachers* to use in the classroom, they simultaneously added a frame for *researchers* to use in their study of teaching in physical education (Rovegno, 2009). This conceptual framework is highly specific to physical education and the

research studies deploying this framework have shaped a distinct interpretation of teachers' practice in comparison to mainstream education research. Later in this chapter, I will examine the consequences of researching these styles of teaching using the "powerful" (Macdonald *et al.*, 2002) process-product model and demonstrate the "illusions" (Rovegno, 2009) this has created about day-to-day teaching in physical education classes.

Preceding sections have demonstrated the *dominant* influence of the process-product model in education including physical education settings. Despite early criticism within the process-product research community (McNeil and Popham, 1967) and beyond (Delamont, 1983; Delamont and Hamilton, 1976; Doyle, 1977), this form of research continues to inform our understanding of classroom practice in education in general (Rex *et al.*, 2006) and physical education settings in particular (Rink, 2003, 2006, 2013). I concur with Doyle's (1977) critique where he points up two fundamental flaws with 'process-product' research:

1. The model fails to acknowledge the underpinning processes between teacher behaviour and pupil achievement.
2. The model over-emphasises the teacher's behaviour and overlooks the possibility that the teacher's behaviour is often *the result* of pupils' behaviour and the contextual constraints of classrooms.

Over and above Doyle's (1977) concerns, I am well aware of further limitations of using pre-existing observation instruments (Delamont and Hamilton, 1986; Denscombe, 2007). Given the concerns of the present study to provide a 'fresh' interpretation of classroom practice, I especially wanted to avoid the issues raised by Delamont and Hamilton (1986) and Denscombe (2007) whereby the participant teachers' practices in a research study simply become a reflection of the pre-specified criteria detailed in observation schedules designed by preceding researchers.

Looking specifically then, at alternate forms of classroom research, Rex *et al.* (2006) identify six distinct perspectives: cognitive, situated cognition, ethnographic, sociolinguistic, critical, and teacher researcher. In essence, these perspectives appear to be the existing options for going “where that [process-product] model is unable, or...unwilling, to go”. In reviewing Rex *et al.*’s (2006) overview, I can see the value in several of these alternatives, but the “ethnographic perspective” appears to align most closely with the present study’s concern to provide a ‘fresh’ interpretation of classroom practice. They explain the ethnographic perspective in the following way:

...classroom interactions do not take place in a vacuum, ethnographic...researchers look at classroom interactions as well as the culture-laden contexts in which these interactions occur...interactions...may be best understood in relation to whole life worlds...to investigate the processes of interaction, to understand how they occur, and analyze how individuals’ own cultures and dispositions play a role in shaping those processes (Rex *et al.*, 2006, p. 744).

Using the ethnographic perspective in similar ways to Rex *et al.*’s (2006) description, educational researchers have managed to connect classroom interactions to wider issues and cultural concerns. For example, Tharp and Gallimore (1988) claimed that the wider policies and expectations of the school context influence teaching interactions in the classroom, while Moll *et al.* (1992) concluded children’s household interactions entwine with their classroom interactions. This brief overview demonstrates the possibility for forms of ethnographic research to bridge the dualism in education and physical education research identified earlier by LeCompte (2009) and Lee (2003).

While Rex *et al.* (2006) would appear to have provided a comprehensive overview of classroom research perspectives I would argue they have made a crucial oversight similar to that in a previous review of educational research offered by Jacob (1987). In response to Jacob (1987), Atkinson, Delamont and Hammersley (1988) argue she over-emphasised “American research” and, while there are “overlaps”, a substantial body of educational research conducted in the British

context was “ignored”. Specifically, Atkinson *et al.* (1988) highlight *one* aspect of the ‘sociology of education’ movement in British classrooms as a similar, but slightly different, form of research to the ethnographic tradition preferred by American scholars. Recognising both these American and British styles of classroom research as broadly interested in “interactionism” and the researchers as “interactionists”, Atkinson *et al.* (1988) explain:

There is a characteristically British flavour imparted to the North American style of interactionism. First, studies of everyday life in schools and classrooms have consistently treated the teacher as a ‘worker’ faced with repeated problems of ‘coping’ and ‘surviving’ under trying circumstances...[a] significant difference from much American writing, which has placed greater emphasis on the role of the teacher as a representative of ‘mainstream’ culture...British interactionists have thus frequently portrayed the classroom as a site of actual or potential conflict...Teachers and pupils are locked in a competitive struggle for legitimacy and control (p. 236).

Atkinson *et al.* (1988) illuminate key, albeit rather subtle, distinctions between this American and the British tradition of classroom research. Since the current study is seeking a more animated account of classroom life, I would argue that reviewing this British sociological tradition of classroom research offers insights extending far beyond Alexander’s (2008b) perspective of using “*method X* to enable students *to achieve Y*”. Therefore, the next section presents the work of a number of prominent scholars who have provided representations of classroom practice too valuable for the current study to ignore: Stephen Ball, Sara Delamont, David Hargreaves, Andy Hargreaves, and Peter Woods.

2.4.2 *Findings from British studies of face-to-face interaction in classrooms*

The introductory section to this chapter acknowledged that a particular form of classroom research flourished throughout the 1970s and early 1980s and then virtually disappeared from the research landscape (Atkinson and Housley, 2003). Before launching in to present key findings from these classroom studies, it is necessary to first locate this form of research within the British sociology of

education movement and then explain its rise and subsequent fall from the research landscape.

More specifically, within the British sociology of education movement, a number of scholars employed a theoretical perspective called ‘symbolic interactionism’, to document the *micro* level interactions between teachers and pupils in school classrooms (Atkinson *et al.*, 2003). The following methodology chapter will discuss this theoretical perspective in more detail, but, as an initial statement, this involves conducting research:

...not by testing, measuring and experimenting...It [symbolic interactionism] is often called participant observation because the observer talks to, and participates in activities with, the people she is studying (Delamont, 1983, p. 15).

The sociological emphasis of these interactionist classroom studies directly engages with a perennial debate at the very core of sociology; that is, the challenge of striking a balance between the face-to-face interactions of individuals or groups of people (micro-level sociology) and the large-scale structures of society (macro-level sociology) (Giddens and Sutton, 2013).

Scholars have consistently doubted whether interactionist researchers manage to reconcile the micro and macro dimensions in sociological studies more generally (Giddens and Sutton, 2013; Musolf, 2003; Reynolds and Herman-Kinney, 2003) and in educational studies of the classroom in particular (Kinney, Rosier and Harger, 2003). Nevertheless, a small number of British interactionist researchers studied the face-to-face interactions of teachers and pupils at the micro level and made concerted efforts to connect these observations to the macro-level structures of society (Atkinson *et al.*, 2003). While I recognise the mixed successes of some interactionist researchers (Kinney *et al.*, 2003), it appears these British scholars were concerned with avoiding the type of micro-macro divide in educational research identified by LeCompte (2009) and Lee (2003).

This section will present findings from these interactionist scholars captured during the “boom” period of this form of classroom research (Delamont, 1978). For, writing in 1978, Delamont predicted that this form of research was rapidly “going out of fashion” and it was soon to be “*shunned* as a wave of enthusiasm for various forms of *political economy*...swept the field” (Delamont, 1978, p. 62, emphasis added). Delamont (1983) later gave a detailed account of two underlying causes for the subsequent demise of this interactionist research tradition. Firstly, the parent discipline of sociology returned to favour a macro-level emphasis. These changes in sociological thinking consequently steered educational research away from documenting the immediate face-to-face interactions in classrooms (Atkinson *et al.*, 2003; Delamont, 1983).

Secondly, this shift in sociological thinking coincided with the “radical change” in education identified earlier by Ball (2003); that is, the mid-to-late 1970s heralded the arrival of neo-liberal thinking and this contributed to increased government interest in, and control of, the educational landscape. Thereafter “big money” research grants were increasingly awarded to studies documenting the impact of the government’s educational reform policies and this neo-liberal agenda exacerbated the demise of interactionist research (Delamont, 1983). Thus, after an upsurge of interest in the 1970s and 1980s, few studies have adopted this specific sociological form of classroom research in recent years (Atkinson *et al.*, 2003; Ball, 2004; Delamont, 2012a, b).

Consequently, I acknowledge that the following three sections appear to draw upon ‘old-fashioned’ research publications conducted at least three decades ago, when the whole secondary school context was completely different from its present day form. However, I would argue that this review is critical for the present thesis as these studies provide a contrasting account of classroom practice, where the interactions between a teacher and pupils extend beyond using a “*method X to enable students to achieve Y*” perspective. Given the dearth of research of this type (Atkinson *et al.*, 2003; Ball, 2004; Delamont, 2012a, b.), key

insights from this perspective have started to ‘fade from memory’ and are in danger of disappearing from the research landscape.

Subsequent sections will explore three key insights from interactionist research – teacher-pupil interaction, power asymmetries, and teacher-pupil negotiation – thereby providing a dynamic account of the school classroom.

2.4.2.1 Teacher-pupil interaction: establishing a ‘working’ consensus

Central to grasping how interactionist researchers interpret the classroom is understanding the highly dynamic nature of teacher-pupil interaction. Drawing on a key tenet of symbolic interactionism, where all humans have the capacity to interpret the world around them (McCall, 2003), the interactions that take place between a teacher and a pupil(s) are contingent upon establishing a *common perspective* on classroom activities and events (Delamont, 1983; David Hargreaves, 1975; Woods, 1980a, b). For example, David Hargreaves (1975) explains that when a teacher and pupil(s) come together in the classroom in a school setting, successful participation is dependent upon recognising other people’s “definition of the situation” and then acting accordingly (p. 124). However, as Delamont (1983) asserts from her experience observing classrooms in five secondary schools across Scotland and England, this “does not imply that the world each of us constructs is necessarily well built” (p. 26). That is to say, our constructions of the world and, therefore, classroom situations, are susceptible to erroneous assumptions and mismatches in interpretation between a teacher and pupils.

David Hargreaves (1975), drawing on his previous experience of studying ‘deviance’ in schools across England, recognises three basic outcomes when the teacher and pupils strive to reach a consensus about the definition of the situation in classroom settings.

1. There is a high degree of *concordance* between the teacher and pupils. “Here the definitions of the situation by teacher and by pupils are congruent and compatible. The situation is *pleasant for both* participants...” (pp. 132-133, emphasis added).
2. There is a high degree of *discordance* between the teacher and pupils. “In this case the definitions of the situations are incompatible; and consensus is low. The situation is *unpleasant for the participants...*” (p. 133, emphasis added).
3. There is *pseudo-concordance* between the teacher and pupils. “Here the definitions of the situation are congruent and compatible only in part. The situation is *partly pleasant, partly unpleasant*. It represents a doubtful bargain: sometimes the participants make profits and at other times losses” (p. 133, emphasis added).

Generally, interactionist researchers reveal that extreme examples of concord and discord between teachers and pupils are uncommon (Ball, 1980; Delamont, 1983; Hammersley and Turner, 1980; David Hargreaves, 1975; Woods, 1980a, b).

Rather, forms of pseudo-concordance appear to be the more typical outcome, whereby the teacher and pupils meet each other somewhere around the halfway point in relation to the demands and expectations of the classroom (David Hargreaves, 1975). This ‘pseudo’ position simultaneously falls short of the *ideal* definitions of the situation for the teacher and pupils and involves establishing a *shared perspective* of classroom activities and events. Delamont (1983) explains this as a “working” consensus and adds it is:

...a relationship that works, and is about doing work. The interaction is understood as the daily ‘give-and-take’ between teacher and pupils. The process is one of *negotiation* – an on-going process by which everyday realities of the classroom are constantly defined and redefined (p. 28, original emphasis).

This quotation highlights the relatively unstable nature of the classroom where “negotiation” is a crucial part of the interactions that take place between a teacher and pupils. That is to say, during the “daily ‘give-and-take’” of the classroom, one

of these parties – the teacher or the pupil(s) – may try to advance their own particular definition of the situation. Before examining the idea of negotiation in more detail, it is first important to acknowledge a characteristic peculiar to the interactions of classroom settings; that is, the *power* differential that exists between the teacher and pupils (Delamont, 1978, 1983; David Hargreaves, 1975, 1978).

2.4.2.2 *Power asymmetries*

Delamont (1983) stresses that classroom researchers cannot “lose sight of the dimension of *power*” (p. 27, original emphasis). I concur with Delamont and acknowledge that dimensions of power affect the nature of teacher-pupil interactions in school settings in comparison to other everyday social interactions. A contemporary analysis of power could involve drawing on the “ultra-radical” work of Michel Foucault and his followers (Lukes, 2005, p. 88), to analyse the interplay between knowledge, truth, and power, and the effects of this interplay on the interactions between teachers and pupils in education and physical education settings. In fact, Foucault’s work has been progressively influential in physical education research since the early-to-mid-1990s (Wright, 2006).

My own preference, however, is to avoid taking this popular line of analysis. A critique following Foucault’s ‘Discipline and Punish’ (1991), for example, where he draws parallels between prisons and schools, would paint a much too “monolithic” (Lukes, 2005) picture of the relations between teachers and pupils. Indeed, Lukes (2005) explains:

One reason for this one-sidedness is doubtless that Foucault was, characteristically, not investigating actual disciplinary practices but their design. His purpose was to portray their idealized form – describing not how they work, or even worked, but an ideal type of how they are meant to work (p. 93).

The “idealized form” of power and disciplinary practices highlighted above appear to present an approach unfit for my current research interests. My study is not

concerned with how classroom interaction is “meant to work”, but rather it seeks to provide a ‘fresh’ interpretation of the interactions that take place between the teacher and pupils. David Hargreaves (1975) provides a valuable account of power in classroom settings, which avoids relying on this type of “idealized” thinking.

Drawing on his empirical research in classrooms, Hargreaves contends that teacher-pupil interactions are “asymmetrically contingent”; that is, there is an unequal, but not wholly asymmetric power dynamic that exists between the teacher and the pupils in a class. David Hargreaves (1975) identifies two key features of schooling that construct this “asymmetrically contingent” nature of power:

1. The pupils are legally bound to attend school and, while most pupils attend freely, a range of policies and sanctions are in place to ensure they participate in a range of learning experiences.
2. Several sources of power imbue the role of a teacher: the teacher is an adult, the teacher has a vast disciplinary knowledge base, and there is historical acceptance of the teacher as an authority figure in school and in the community.

Following David Hargreaves (1975), while the “dice are loaded in the teacher’s favour” (p. 115), I recognise that the pupils are not entirely ‘powerless’ in school settings. For instance, Woods (1980b) highlights the ways in which the pupils employ a range of “strategies” to advance their own particular definition of the situation in classes. Accordingly, we cannot overlook how both these parties – the teacher and the pupils – interact with each other when they come together to pursue goals and learning intentions in the classroom, suggesting a livelier picture than can be captured by a “using method X to enable students to achieve Y” perspective (Alexander, 2008b, p. 30). It has been noted that for Delamont (1983), the concept of “negotiation” is a fundamental part of this dynamic picture and the next section will address this topic in more detail.

2.4.2.3 *Teacher-pupil negotiation*

Woods presents two complementary volumes, each addressing classroom interaction from a different perspective; that is, the teacher's perspective (1980a) and the pupils' perspective (1980b). Recognising "negotiation" as a range of "coping strategies", Woods (1980b) explains three fundamental assumptions:

1. Negotiation is related to power: "Though [it is] generally recognised that teachers have more power than pupils...they [teachers] create the demands, set the scene, and are imbued with authority...the extent to which a teacher can influence pupils in accordance with his [sic] intentions in any given situation is highly problematic. This is what the art of teaching is all about – getting pupils to do what you wish...for the teacher...this is as much a matter of learning and devising [coping] strategies" (p. 14).
2. Negotiation constantly changes and redefines relationships between teachers and pupils: "...teacher-pupil relationships are not all of a kind...Instead, the interactionist's view is that teachers and pupils are continually creating relationships, changing them, shifting the bases of them, gaining a point here, conceding one there, devising new forms of them, new ways of getting round them, plugging holes in one's own version, detecting weaknesses in others" (p. 14).
3. Negotiation arises when there is a difference of interest between teachers and pupils: "...conformity in the generally accepted sense does not exist. The most dutiful pupil will vary his or her behaviour to some degree...Intentions will be liable to change...at times they [the pupils' interests] may well coincide with those of a teacher...How can the individual [the teacher and the pupil] both maximise his [sic] own interests, and avoid conflict with others all engaged in the same enterprise? Negotiation is the interactionist's answer" (pp. 15-16).

Pulling these three points together reveals that teacher-pupil negotiation is a constantly evolving process used to bridge the gaps that open between a teacher and pupils as they pursue various goals and learning intentions in the classroom. Important for the present thesis are the studies that have identified a number of specific strategies used by teachers in their negotiation efforts with pupils. For instance, Andy Hargreaves (1978), recognising it is challenging to unravel “survival” from “teaching”, points up two inter-related strategies: “policing” and “confrontation-avoidance”. The former includes various forms of teacher domination by controlling pupils’ opportunities to talk, restricting their movement in the classroom, and by setting out clearly the sanctions and moral expectations of the school setting. The latter involves the removal of a pupil from the classroom or instances where the teacher decides to avoid responding to the challenge of a pupil(s).

In sharing insights from his research in one secondary school in England, Woods (1983) highlights a greater number of teacher strategies in comparison to the preceding work of Andy Hargreaves (1978). Woods (1983, p. 110) presents eight teacher strategies ranging in scope from “domination” to “fraternization” in an effort to cope with pupils in the classroom:

- Domination: “keep them down”;
- Removal: “teaching would be all right if it wasn’t for the pupils”;
- Socialisation: “teach them right”;
- Routine: “you’ll be all right once you get the hang of things”;
- Negotiation: “you play ball with me, and I’ll play ball with you”;
- Morale-boosting: “we have to believe”;
- Occupational therapy: “it passes the time”;
- Fraternisation: “if you can’t beat them, join them”.

In essence, Andy Hargreaves (1978) and Woods (1980a, b; 1983) would argue the range of strategies they identify are a part of day-to-day classroom life. Delamont (1983) observes a broad range of teacher strategies similar to those cited above,

claiming these are the “routine encounters” of the classroom. In particular, she paints a picture of classroom life as a site of conflict based upon the need for constant ‘negotiation’ between the teacher and pupil(s). Indeed, after introducing the main “protagonists” – the teacher and the pupils – Delamont (1983) presents a chapter entitled ‘Let Battle Commence: Strategies for the Classroom’.

However, according to Ball (1980), these negotiation efforts may be more striking during “initial encounters” between teachers and newly acquired classes. In fact, based on his observations in a secondary school in England and interviews with student teachers in England, Ball (1980) asserts that teachers are often apprehensive about having researchers present in their classes during these “initial encounters” with pupils; however, he argues “...the reasons for the teacher’s reluctance are exactly why the researcher should be there” (p. 144). Additionally, I recognise the increasing ethical demands associated with conducting research in education and other social sciences in recent times (Hammersley, 2009; Sikes and Piper, 2010), while necessary to protect participants, have further restricted the possibilities of capturing teachers working with newly acquired classes.

Nevertheless, Ball (1980) goes on to add that:

...in cases where the researcher is able to be present during these initial encounters, his [sic] conceptual and empirical grasp of the observed situation at this stage, if it also happens to be the starting point of a research project, may be so underdeveloped as to render the complexities of these encounters virtually unintelligible (p. 144).

Despite the challenges identified in this quotation, Ball (1980) describes what he calls the “process of establishment” whereby there is “an exploratory interaction process” between teachers and pupils during initial encounters (p. 144). Through this “testing” process “...a more or less permanent, repeated and highly predictable pattern of relationships and interactions emerges” (Ball, 1980, p. 144). Rather than viewing the pupils’ efforts to “test” the teacher during these initial encounters as a challenge to the definition of the situation, Ball (1980) contends

these efforts *may* be pupils' attempts to discover how to perform capably within the teachers' ideal definition of the classroom.

Indeed, Ball (1980) maintains the negotiations that take place during initial encounters can establish a teacher-pupil relationship that leads to less conflict in class settings and a more productive teaching and learning environment.

Therefore, while I am not denying there may be a high degree of conflict between teachers and pupils, and the need for various negotiation strategies to cope with demands in the classroom, following Ball (1980) I would question whether the conflict is as pronounced as Delamont (1983) suggests. While not conducted from an interactionist perspective, contemporary researchers have continued to explore teacher-pupil relationships in education settings (Pianta, 1999). Contemporary research, however, has shifted from a focus on how these relationships interweave with teachers' practices (Pianta, 1999) to investigating the ways in which they contribute to the cognitive, social, and emotional development of pupils (Baker, 2006; Cooper and Mines, 2014; Hamre and Pianta, 2001; Koepke and Harkins, 2008; Maldonado-Carreño and Votruba-Drzal, 2011).

Given the shift away from investigating the conditions of teachers' practice, and the difference of opinion between Delamont (1983) and Ball (1980), an interesting line of enquiry for the present study will be to revisit the notion of teacher-pupil relationships in relation to teachers' classroom practice. Therefore, in this thesis, Chapter 6 examines the matter of teacher-pupil relationships in more detail, and shows how participant teachers saw these relationships as pivotal to their own classroom practices.

2.4.3 Section summary

Preceding sections have sketched out three key insights from interactionist research studies: teacher-pupil interaction, power asymmetries, and teacher-pupil negotiation. An interplay between these insights reveals a highly dynamic picture of classroom life; that is, despite an asymmetric power dynamic between the

teacher and pupils (David Hargreaves, 1975), teachers constantly grapple to establish a common ‘definition of the situation’ (Delamont, 1983; Andy Hargreaves, 1978) and use various forms of negotiation as coping strategies (Ball, 1980; Woods, 1980a, b; 1983). This review of interactionist research was essential as it paints an entirely different picture of classroom life in comparison to much of the educational research presented in preceding sections of this chapter.

Shifting now to examine specifically research in physical education, subsequent sections consider the distinct portrayal of teachers’ practices within this subject area, revealing a further need for the present study to re-examine classroom life.

2.5 Mapping the Physical Education Research Landscape

Interest in physical education teachers’ practice has been a burgeoning area in the research literature over the past 60 years (Housner *et al.*, 2009; Lee, 2003; Macdonald *et al.*, 2002). Macdonald *et al.* (2002) identify several distinctly different theoretical perspectives explicitly informing research investigating physical education teachers’ practice. Macdonald *et al.* (2002) recognise this “richness” as crucial for providing alternative lenses to capture the inherent complexity in educational settings. However, as this section will demonstrate, not all theoretical perspectives carry an equal weighting in the physical education literature (Hopper *et al.*, 2008; Tinning, 2010; Sparkes, 1992, 2002). Sparkes (2002) explains that “scientific tales” have long dominated the physical education community and I would argue this has largely restricted alternate representations of teachers’ practice from emerging. Therefore, using three key research developments as historical ‘markers’, this section demonstrates the ways in which contemporary thinking about physical education teachers’ practice has been distorted in and by the research literature which no longer reflects “real-world teaching” (Rovegno, 2009).

2.5.1 *Historical marker one: the rise of process-product research in the 1970s and 1980s*

Macdonald *et al.* (2002), Lee (2003), and Housner *et al.* (2009) note that, as in the ‘mainstream’ educational literature, positivistic notions from the natural sciences informed much of the early research investigating physical education teachers’ practice. In general terms, these are the types of studies that Lee (2003) refers to as “narrow” in scope and designed to investigate “a particular component of the teacher-learning setting” (p. 9). It has been observed earlier in the chapter that two streams of physical education research emerged in the 1970s and 1980s, which were guided by the assumptions of the process-product model (Dunkin and Biddle, 1974):

- the systematic observation of classrooms to offer accounts of teacher-pupil behaviour (Darst *et al.*, 1989);
- the systematic investigation of a conceptual framework of teaching styles (Mosston, 1966).

Consonant with my earlier review of mainstream education literature, my critique holds that process-product research presents an over-simplistic, linear view of classroom teaching whereby the teacher directly causes pupil learning and behavioural outcomes. These two streams of research have each shaped *contemporary* thinking about physical education teachers’ practice, albeit in different ways.

Direct observations of practice using systematic observation schedules were so prevalent throughout the 1970s and 1980s that Locke (1987) termed this period the “...golden age of teacher watching” (p. 84). However, as will be indicated in historical markers two and three, the research interests of physical education scholars increasingly broadened in scope from the mid-1980s onwards. As such, there was a steady retreat from the use of systematic observations (Locke, 1987; Macdonald *et al.*, 2002; Rink, 2003; 2006) and other more ecologically driven

forms of research in classrooms (Hastie, 2009; Hastie and Siedentop, 2006). While this “golden age” faded (Locke, 1987), the enduring “scientific tales” (Sparkes, 2002) that these ‘early’ studies have told about teachers’ practice remain powerful. In a paper entitled ‘Effective Instruction in Physical Education’, Rink (2003) explains that:

Most of what we know about effective teaching comes to us from well-conducted classroom research studies that identify what teachers do who produce the most learning... These efforts were large, correlational studies conducted primarily in a process-product research design (p. 165).

This quotation exemplifies the way in which insights from these systematic observation studies have shaped contemporary thinking about physical education teachers’ practice. As Sparkes (2002) asserts, the research assumptions of scientific studies are usually “taken for granted” and are never really “subjected to scrutiny” (p. 28).

Turning to look at the systematic investigation of teaching styles (Mosston, 1966), this research emerged during the 1970s and continues to thrive in contemporary times (Byra, 2006; Goldberger, Ashworth and Byra, 2012). While there was interest in researching various teaching methods prior to the advent of Mosston’s (1966) model of teaching styles, his work added a conceptual framework for process-product researchers to study systematically the teaching of physical education across the world (Rovegno, 2009). Tinning (2010) underscores the influence that this body of work has had on the physical education profession:

Most PE teachers [throughout the world] learn about Mosston’s Spectrum of Teaching Styles in their undergraduate teacher education and his framework... has had a central role in shaping the way in which many PE teachers think about their teaching activities (p. 43).

In the light of Tinning’s comments about the ubiquitous nature of Mosston’s work, it can be challenging to discuss teaching in physical education without defaulting to the terminology and research findings associated with this framework. Whilst some scholars may view the widespread understanding of

these teaching styles as a major advantage for the profession, I would argue, like Rovegno (2009), that the dominance of this framework has restricted alternate representations of teachers' classroom practice from emerging. Given the continuing dominance of Mosston's (1966) conceptual framework, I will return to his work shortly to demonstrate the ways in which the restricted nature of this research has created many "illusions" about teachers' day-to-day practice (Rovegno, 2009).

2.5.2 Historical marker two: a broader research focus from the mid-1980s

Physical education research broadened in focus from the mid-1980s onwards (Housner *et al.*, 2009; Lee, 2003; Macdonald, 2002; Pope, 2006). Pope (2006) claims that there was unease in the early-1980s relating to the "restrictive nature" of research investigating teachers' practice in physical education. Indeed, Pope (2006) cites the publication of Templin and Olson's (1983) methodological text as the "marked" development that started to influence thinking in the physical education research community. From the mid-1980s onwards, a number of alternative research agendas started to emerge that generally, but not exclusively, used qualitative research methods to capture interpretations of teachers' practices. The series of chapters in Kirk, MacDonald and O'Sullivan's edited text entitled 'The Handbook of Physical Education' provide an indication of this theoretical progress in recent years (Devis-Devis, 2006; Nilges, 2006; Pope, 2006; Wright, 2006).

Of particular interest for the present thesis are the studies that started to document teacher *and* pupil behaviour in the classroom. The two most relevant developments were:

- Studies inspired by Doyle's (1977) original 'classroom ecology' model to investigate teacher-pupil(s) interaction and the immediate constraints of the classroom environment. This research started to re-conceptualise life in physical education settings by re-casting teacher-pupil behaviour as a more negotiated and unpredictable process

(Hastie, 1998; Hastie, 2009; Hastie and Siedentop, 2006; McCaughtry *et al.*, 2008; Rovegno, 1992, 1994, 1995, 2006; Tousignant and Siedentop, 1983). Tousignant and Siedentop (1983) identified ‘negotiation’ as a key part of classroom life and concluded that: “[c]ooperation between teachers and students in the observed PE setting was achieved through a rather subtle and tacit process of negotiation” (p. 56).

- Studies using forms of ‘ethnography’ to record first-hand accounts of what people say and do in physical education classes (Lyons, 1992). This research started to document the difficulties and challenges for teachers in physical education classrooms and “...put a question mark over some of our assumptions” (Lyons, 1992, p. 267).

In passing, it is worth noting Inez Rovegno’s research contributions to the physical education literature. For over two decades, Rovegno has been the lone researcher to probe consistently our conceptions of teaching and learning in physical education settings (Rovegno, 2006; Rovegno and Dolly, 2006). Drawing on insights from ‘constructivist’ and ‘situated’ perspectives on learning, her empirical explorations have sought to re-conceptualise physical education in relation to how pupils learn and engage in classroom settings (McCaughtry and Rovegno, 2003), how teachers learn about their own practice (Rovegno and Bandhauer, 1997a, b), and the resulting impact of these constructivist learning perspectives for teachers’ practice and teacher development (Rovegno, 1993, 1994; 1995; 1998). Drawing on Rovegno’s line of inquiry about teachers’ practice, what is of critical import to the present study is the ways in which classroom teaching is fluid in nature; influenced by a teacher’s beliefs (Rovegno, 1995; Rovegno and Bandhauer, 1997b), the interactions between a teacher and pupils (Rovegno, 1994), and the constraints of the school setting (Rovegno, 1995).

Despite these developments from Rovegno’s research, alongside examples of classroom ecology and ethnographic research, studies from the mid-1980s were largely framed by what Lee (2003) refers to as the “wider angle” lens. In other

words, the kind of macro-level sociology identified in earlier sections of this thesis increasingly informed physical education research and, accordingly, interests “shifted away from [micro] classroom processes” to include “the study of policy...issues of ‘difference’, identity and the body” (Evans and Davies, 2006, pp. 113-114). Consequently, Hastie (2009) reports that:

...there was a solid and extensive program of research using the classroom ecology model...now fast forward...to 2007 only eight papers [in prominent physical education journals]...identified observation [in classrooms]...as...critical (p. 156).

Likewise, Pope (2006) informs us that many ethnographic studies remain as unpublished PhD theses “collecting dust on the library shelves” (p. 229). The comments of Hastie (2009) and Pope (2006) suggest there has been a progressive ‘disappearance’ of qualitatively driven classroom research in the physical education literature. Therefore, I concur with Rovegno’s (2009) request for an increase in the number of qualitative studies investigating physical education class settings, which may provide findings that challenging existing “conceptions of teaching” in the literature.

2.5.3 Historical marker three: the 1990s onwards and the pre-occupation with ‘what’s broken’

Physical education research from the mid-1990s, still broadening in scope, increasingly turned to interrogate the inequalities and injustices inherent within physical education settings (Macdonald *et al.*, 2002). More specifically, these perspectives progressively brought ‘critical’ lenses to the social world aiming to uncover how inequalities and injustices come to operate in specific physical education contexts and set out to stimulate people’s awareness to promote emancipation and change (Macdonald *et al.*, 2002). The importance of these perspectives is summarised effectively by Luke (1999) in that “...it is imperative...we understand exactly who is being left out and left behind, educationally, economically and socially” (p. 2). Of particular relevance for the

present research is the critical ethnography of Katie Fitzpatrick (Fitzpatrick, 2011, 2013; Fitzpatrick and Russell, 2013) where sustained classroom observations revealed, amongst other things, the many challenges faced by one teacher as he worked to contest the cultural norms with pupils in an ethnically diverse, low-socioeconomic secondary school in New Zealand.

It is difficult to argue that these ‘critical’ perspectives have not advanced physical education in many ways. Who would argue against research agendas based on fairness and equity? Well, Tinning (2002), one of the earliest physical education scholars identifying himself as being “within the critical pedagogy ‘big tent’” (p. 224), argued for more “modest” interpretations. Indeed, reviewing the findings of studies using a ‘critical’ lens to investigate physical education settings, Enright *et al.* (2014) observed that what is shared across this research is a “preoccupation with failure”. It will be recalled from a previous section that Delamont (2012a, b) similarly reports a “pessimistic” trend in contemporary educational research. Rather than broadening our conceptions of teaching, there is a strong move to inform us of “what’s broken” (Enright *et al.*, 2014). The concluding comments of Enright *et al.* (2014) encapsulate the impact of such a deficit-based perspective:

...an unintended consequence of deficit thinking is that sometimes we end up seeking problems even where strengths are shouting at us...to insist only on these sorts of stories is to flatten our experience and to overlook the many other stories that form our field (p. 11).

This quotation illuminates how contemporary research agendas have inadvertently obscured our conceptions of teachers’ practice in physical education settings. These studies use sophisticated theoretical ideas to bring negative constraints into view, but in attempting to make the case for emancipation and change, there is a tendency to overemphasise these constraints as part of the critique (Macdonald *et al.*, 2002; Devis-Devis, 2006). Following Kirk (2010), I am not denying that there is room for improvement and change to physical education teachers’ practices, but I question whether people are “left out” and “left behind” (Luke, 1999) to the extent suggested by these ‘critical’ scholars.

2.5.4 Section summary

The survey of the research landscape provided in this section has revealed the ways in which key research developments have shaped contemporary thinking about physical education teachers' practice. It has shown how: the “scientific tales” of early research studies continue to dominate present day thinking and practice; the broadening of research interests from the mid-1980s led to a progressive ‘disappearance’ of qualitative research accounts documenting events in classrooms; and the pre-occupation from the mid-1990s with “what’s broken” has obscured “other [more appreciative] stories” about physical education from emerging (Enright *et al.*, 2014).

Drawing these three ‘markers’ together and considering their collective impact suggests there are profound issues for the physical education profession. Consonant with Rovegno’s (2009) concerns, there is a danger our contemporary “conceptions of teaching have been largely determined by university scholars” (p. 53); this is due partly to the demands of research methodologies and partly to their allegiances to certain theoretical perspectives. I am similarly concerned with the ways in which contemporary research appears no longer to paint a faithful portrait of teachers’ practices in physical education settings.

The current study contests the notion that “university scholars” should completely shape contemporary thinking about physical education teachers’ practice. I also support the related developments in practitioner inquiry (Casey, 2013a, b; Goodyear, Casey and Kirk, 2013; Munn, 2008; O’Sullivan, Tannehill and Hinchion, 2010) and self-study (Ovens and Fletcher, 2014; Samaras, 2011), where educators themselves have started to shape conceptions of teaching in physical education. While I am no longer a school-based practitioner, my study looks to provide a detailed account of physical education teachers’ day-to-day practice, supporting the notion that teachers’ practices and ideas can supplement and extend research scholarship. The subsequent methodology chapter will explain the research perspective adopted in the present study, exploring in detail how it

involved documenting teachers' thinking and actions in their daily working lives. This stance led me to investigate the actions of teachers without relying on a highly restrictive, experimental research methodology or advancing a pre-existing theoretical agenda for how things 'ought to be'.

2.5.5 *The domination of Mosston's 'Spectrum of Teaching Styles'*

A preceding section recognised "scientific tales" (Sparkes, 2002) in general, and the work of Mosston (1966) in particular, as the most dominant force on contemporary thinking about physical education teaching across the world. Accordingly, this section will examine this framework in more detail and reveal the need for more realistic and nuanced accounts of teachers' practices in physical education settings to emerge.

Mosston's teaching styles were originally designed to provide a conceptual framework for *teachers* to use in the classroom (Mosston, 1972). Indeed, this framework has been so popular that contemporary teacher education programmes across the world still heavily endorse these styles of teaching (Chatoupis, 2009; Chatoupis and Vagenas, 2011; Rovegno, 2009; Tinning, 2010). While I acknowledge the overwhelming support for Mosston's work across the profession (Goldberger *et al.*, 2012), I have sourced some studies that identify major implications of a single framework dominating the teaching of physical education. For example, over 30 years ago, Metzler (1985) argued that:

...the spectrum...is one of the most...widespread conceptualisations of teaching...So many use it that the inherent concepts, assumptions, and implications are accepted as dogma (p. 145).

Despite Metzler's caveat, Sicilia-Camacho and Brown (2008) more recently reveal:

...the logics embedded within...the spectrum, have taken a central place in PE pedagogy...[it is the] taken-for-granted core logic for knowledge transmission (p. 86).

Following Metzler (1985) and Sicilia-Camacho and Brown (2008), I am also concerned with the “dogma” and “taken-for-granted” assumptions of this framework. Therefore, subsequent paragraphs will first deconstruct the underlying “logics” of Mosston’s work, and then scrutinise the implications of *researchers* promulgating this framework using a highly restrictive, experimental research design.

As illustrated in Figure 2-2, Mosston (1972) categorised his “spectrum” of teaching styles based on the degree of interaction between the teacher and pupils during a teaching “episode”.

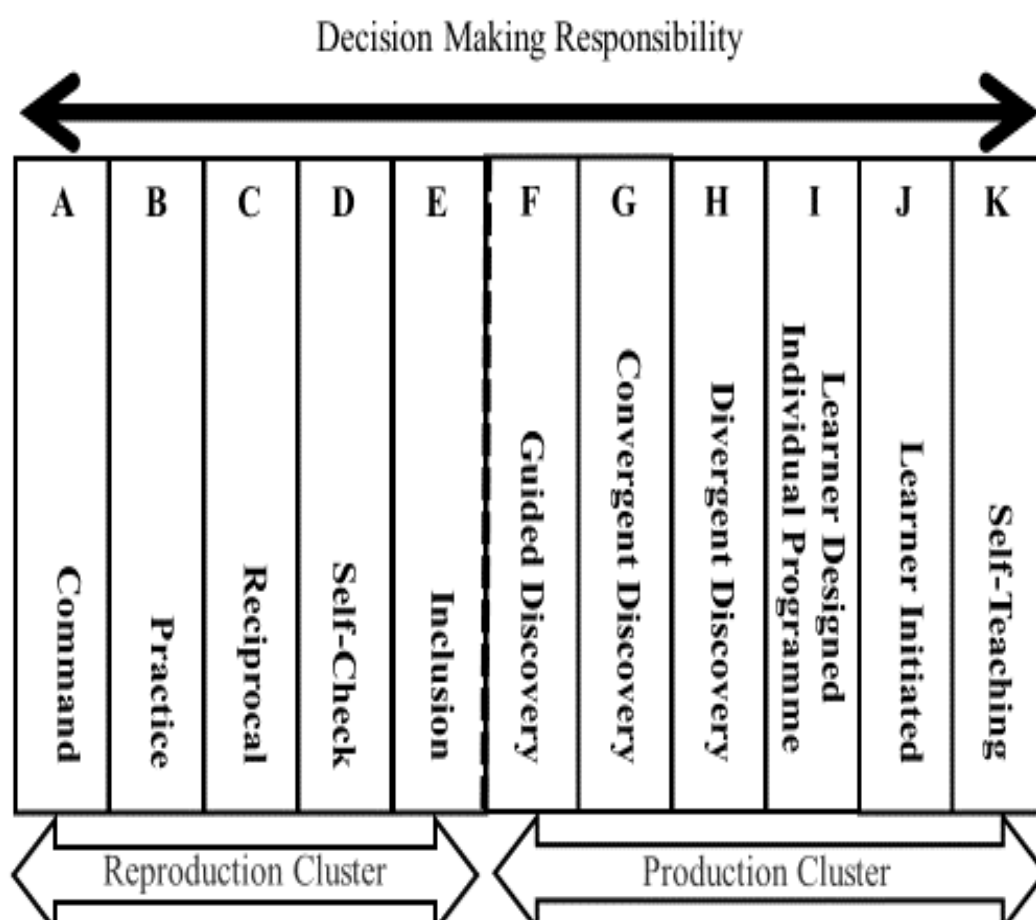


Figure 2-2: Summary of Mosston's Spectrum of Teaching Styles (adapted from Mosston and Ashworth, 2002)

An episode is only a small segment of a full lesson. The idea is that a series of episodes are ‘stepping stones’ for reaching an overall lesson objective. Eleven “landmark” styles (named from style A through to style K) are organised into two distinct “clusters” of styles: the ‘reproduction’ cluster and the ‘production’ cluster (Mosston and Ashworth, 1994).

These clusters of styles are summarised in the following way:

- The ‘reproduction’ cluster consists of styles A – E and the *teacher takes more responsibility* for the decisions that take place before, during, and after a teaching episode. These styles aim to reproduce and refine knowledge that is *familiar* to the pupil(s) (Mosston and Ashworth, 1994).
- The ‘production’ cluster consists of styles F – K and the *pupil takes increasing responsibility* for the decisions that take place before, during, and after a teaching episode. These styles aim to promote the discovery of *unfamiliar* knowledge to the pupil(s) (Mosston and Ashworth, 1994).

This unified theory of teaching styles provides a means for teachers to extend their teaching repertoire in the classroom beyond their own “idiosyncratic” preferences (Mosston, 1972). In particular, note the way in which these two distinct clusters provide scope for both the teacher and pupils to take a degree of responsibility for making decisions in physical education classes. Importantly, Mosston’s thinking in relation to the teaching styles spectrum shifted over the years in three marked ways:

1. The “versus” notion in the first edition claimed some styles were more superior to others (Mosston, 1966).
2. The “non-versus” notion in the second edition claimed all styles were mutually exclusive (Mosston, 1981).
3. The “mobility ability” dimension of the fifth edition claimed it was possible to shift rapidly within and between clusters and blend styles together in infinite ways (Mosston and Ashworth, 2002).

A number of scholars raise critical issues about the underlying logic of these teaching styles in comparison to teachers' everyday practices in schools (Rovegno, 2009; Sicilia-Camacho and Brown, 2008; Tinning, 2010). For instance, Tinning (2010) contests the way in which Mosston's work (1966, 1981, 2002) suggests that the indicative quality of a 'good' teacher is the ability to implement a broad range of teaching styles. Rather, Tinning (2010) recognises teaching as a far more "interactive process" whereby a range of factors – the teacher, the pupils, the activity, and the lesson objective – simultaneously influence the ways in which a teacher interacts with pupils in the classroom. Consequently, he explains:

...teachers seldom employ pedagogical methods [such as Mosston's spectrum] in a pristine fashion or according to a particular definition...they will usually teach with more of a hybrid method – a bit of this, a bit of that... (Tinning, 2010, p. 44).

This quotation challenges the way in which the spectrum presents these styles of teaching as a set of 'tools' that a 'good' teacher can simply implement as part of their practice. Instead, Tinning's (2010) work extends beyond these "technical" interpretations of teaching and observes a more complex picture whereby a teacher regulates his or her practices in accordance with evolving classroom situations.

Sicilia-Camacho and Brown (2008) make a similar, but slightly different, point to Tinning (2010). They specifically challenge the underlying logic of Mosston and Ashworth's (2002) later amendments to the spectrum arguing that the "mobility-ability" dimension creates the impression that teachers simply deploy these styles of teaching in a highly uncritical fashion. In other words, this broad framework presents a range of options for a teacher and he or she can simply choose to implement a style without a deeper awareness of their own, or each style's, educational philosophy (Sicilia-Camacho and Brown, 2008). This point similarly challenges the way in which Mosston's work presents a view of teaching as a straightforward and technical endeavour.

In addition, my own personal experiences as a physical education teacher do not harmonise with these technical accounts of physical education. For example, during my undergraduate studies at the University of Edinburgh from 1999 to 2003, I too was introduced to Mosston's work. An intensive module – spanning more than 30 hours of lectures, seminars, and practical workshops – was dedicated solely to studying Mosston's teaching styles framework. While I believe this repertoire of styles to be a useful guide for the different ways a teacher may interact with pupils in classes, the underlying logic entirely overlooks a fundamental dimension of classroom settings. Consonant with earlier discussions of interactionist research, I recognise a crucial power struggle that exists between the teacher and pupils when they come together in class settings. With Mosston's work simply assuming teachers and pupils will automatically share the decision making responsibilities in classes, this underplays the type of "competitive struggle for legitimacy and control" outlined by Atkinson *et al.* (1988, p. 236). Indeed, later chapters of this thesis – Chapters 5 and 6 – present findings that reveal an interactive relationship exists between teachers and pupil in class settings.

Moving to consider how Mosston's teaching styles simultaneously added a conceptual framework for *researchers* to use in their study of teaching in physical education, Chatoupis (2009) confirms that:

SRT [Spectrum Research on Teaching] was based on that process-product paradigm. ...The logic is that specific teaching styles, because of the specific teacher behavior they assign and specific learning outcomes they encourage, create conditions for learning that promote the particular learning outcome at hand (p. 194).

As Chatoupis (2009) suggests in this quotation, a process-product research design has informed the majority of studies investigating Mosston's spectrum of teaching styles. Thus, a pre-occupation of the teaching styles research has involved analysing what the teacher does when using a style(s) and how this affects pupils' learning and behaviour. Spectrum research has adjusted over the years to accommodate *some* of the adaptations of Mosston's thinking outlined in preceding

sections. The majority of initial studies (1970-1980) reflected the “versus” notion by either comparing one style against another, or comparing a style from the reproduction cluster against a style from the production cluster (Byra, 2006; Chatoupis, 2009). Subsequent studies (1980-present) make efforts to reflect the “non-versus” notion by reporting on pupils’ learning or pupils’ physical, cognitive, and affective responses to *one style* used throughout an entire unit of work (Byra, 2006; Chatoupis, 2009).

However, herein lies Rovegno’s (2009) concern: the design of these studies is such that research protocols demand just one style is operationalised in a unit of work to verify that the outcome of a given study can be attributed to the particular style under investigation. Crucially, the “mobility ability” potential of Mosston and Ashworth’s (2002) later revisions of the spectrum has largely been *overlooked* by researchers due to the incumbent demands of research methodology. It will be recalled that Tinning (2010) believes teachers use a “hybrid” of styles; this “mobility ability” idea appears to be more representative of teachers’ classroom practices. Rovegno (2009) explains that Mosston and Ashworth’s (2002) revision of the spectrum:

...implies a far less controlled and tightly defined use of teaching styles than can be done in a research study on one or two styles... The full value of Mosston’s theory... gets lost in research because of the requirement that the teacher [involved in the research study] only use one style (pp. 53-54).

Rovegno (2009) continues to observe that the ‘teaching’ reported in these studies is an “artifact of the research methodology, rather than a study of real-world teaching” (p. 54). Much of what we know about teaching through these studies is therefore an “illusion” created by “academics” based on the demands of their highly restrictive, experimental research designs (Rovegno, 2009). To compound the problem, university scholars and students read these accounts of classroom practice in academic journals. Thus, Mosston’s teaching styles tend to be understood and performed in a highly restrictive fashion and in ways that fail to reflect day-to-day teaching practice in schools (Rovegno, 2009; Tinning, 2010).

My experience of Mosston's work during my undergraduate studies reflects this highly restrictive view of teaching physical education, contrasting with my later school-based teaching experiences.

Given the concerns of this study to capture a 'fresh' interpretation of teachers' practice, I would argue that the tendency to depict the world empirically in a way that is capable *only* of reflecting the instruments used during the research process is a sham. It is an 'unfair' picture. Consequently, I concur with Rovegno (2009) where she advises there is a need for more qualitative research in a "naturalistic setting" as few in-depth studies have investigated teachers' practice in this way in physical education. Crucially, I recognise that adopting a naturalistic stance also presents a *restricted* account of the empirical world, but it is restricted in quite *different* ways from much of the preceding research conducted in physical education class settings. Indeed, adopting a naturalistic stance would involve starting from 'scratch' and building a conceptualisation from the 'bottom-up' as this would enable an account to emerge that challenges the taken-for-granted ways teaching has been depicted in existing research literature.

2.5.6 Physical education research: what do we know about teachers' practice?

Thus far, I have portrayed research efforts documenting physical education teachers' practices as fraught with problems and pitfalls. Notwithstanding these limitations, it is important to reflect on what we have learned about teachers and teaching from these research studies to ensure this thesis builds upon existing understanding.

The majority of existing physical education literature has presented a largely restricted account of teachers' professional capabilities (Tinning, 2010; 2015). Tinning (2010) explains the ways in which the literature portrays teachers' deployment of various "teaching or pedagogical methods" in class settings as relatively straightforward in nature:

In most texts on PE, teaching or pedagogical methods are discussed as a range of options that can be chosen purposefully [by the teacher] in order to bring about specific explicit learning outcomes. Pedagogical methods are portrayed as if they are merely *technical procedures* that can be applied in given situations. The expectation is that using a given method will bring about desired results or outcomes (p. 49, emphasis added).

Tinning (2015) continues to highlight his concerns in relation to this overly simplistic picture of the teaching *and* learning process:

...this trend ignores the arguments of complexity thinking...with its non-linear orientation to antecedents and events and its recognition that the pedagogical encounter...between task, teacher and learner is inherently complex and unpredictable...focusing on the relationship between any two dimensions (e.g. teacher and task) while bracketing the other (e.g. the student) will inevitably present an incomplete account (pp. 681-682).

Over and above Tinning's (2010, 2015) concerns, physical education literature has, also, routinely reported teachers' practices across the world as over-reliant on 'direct' teaching approaches (Bulger and Housner, 2009; Capel, 2007; Cothran and Kulinna, 2008; Curtner-Smith *et al.*, 2001; Hardman and Marshall, 2000, 2005; Kirk, 2010; Kulinna and Cothran, 2003; Pühse and Gerber, 2005). For example, large-scale international comparison surveys by Hardman and Marshall (2000, 2005) and Pühse and Gerber (2005), suggest teachers remain largely in control of the events that take place in physical education settings. Additionally, in three large-scale studies researching teachers' use of Mosston's Spectrum of teaching styles (Curtner-Smith *et al.*, 2001; Kulinna and Cothran, 2003; and Sympas, Digelidis and Watt, 2016), discovered that teachers prefer to use the "reproduction" styles of teaching. As explained earlier, these styles of teaching are characterised by the teacher making decisions before, during, and after teaching episodes. On this theme of the predominant use of direct teaching approaches, Metzler (1989) and Smith, Kerr and Wang (1993) report that physical education teachers spend around two-thirds of their time organising the pupils and explaining various tasks during lessons.

Concerns regarding the prevalence of ‘direct’ teaching have intensified in recent years as the possibility of, and expectations for, physical education lessons to address a wider range of learning experiences have emerged (Bailey *et al.*, 2009; Jess and Thorburn, 2015; Kirk 2013). In other words, alongside supporting the skills and abilities associated with physical development, lessons should contribute to the cognitive, social, and emotional development of children. While physical education is capable of achieving a wide range of educational outcomes (Bailey *et al.*, 2009), the likelihood of a “one-size-fits-all” approach achieving these broad learning experiences is scant (Kirk, 2013). In recognising the enduring trend of ‘direct’ teaching in physical education, and the contemporary demands of addressing a wider range of learning experiences, Kirk (2010) warns of the challenges ahead for the profession and the possibility of the subject becoming “extinct” in the near future.

Kirk (2010) explains the scale of the problem facing the profession by pointing up the connections between teachers’ styles of teaching and a popular form of curriculum design in physical education. The “multi-activity” model organises the physical education curriculum by presenting a wide variety of activities to children in short, discrete units (Kirk, 2010; Kulinna, 2008). An underlying assumption of this curriculum model is that the large spectrum of activities allows pupils to discover an activity that they enjoy, increasing the likelihood of participation in this activity throughout their lives (Kirk, 2004). By framing the physical education curriculum around a ‘multi-activity’ model, however, the dominant conception of teaching physical education in recent years has tilted towards a preference for developing various “sport-techniques” (Kirk, 2010).

The connection between the ‘multi-activity’ model and developing ‘sport techniques’ is of particular import for this appears to influence physical education teachers’ practice (Capel, 2007; Kirk, 2010). This conception has resulted in ‘sport-techniques’ being learned by pupils in isolation from game-like contexts and predominantly from direct teacher instruction (Capel, 2007; Kirk, 2010). Importantly, Kirk (2010) does not perceive previous or even current teachers as

the catalyst for this conception of physical education. Instead, he links the status quo to a complex interplay between several factors: the subject's historical development; teacher recruitment and socialisation; physical education teacher education programmes; logistical constraints within schools; traditional views of knowledge and motor learning theory. While Kirk (2010) recognises an abundance of ways in which teachers' practice can be conceptualised in physical education, he contends the "regime" listed above has prevented "radical" change from taking place.

In response to the dissatisfaction with 'traditional' physical education, a body of research *started* in the 1970s, and continues to emerge, proposing different curriculum and pedagogical models as a way to enhance teachers' practice and pupils' experiences in physical education (Jess and Thorburn, 2015; Kirk, 2010, 2012, 2013). This section will discuss these curriculum and pedagogical models, but before doing so, it is worth noting that these models have provided many innovative examples for practice in physical education settings (Kirk, 2010, 2012, 2013). However, commenting specifically in relation to these innovative models, Bulger and Housner (2009) point up the following limitations:

In spite of these advances [in curriculum and pedagogical models], substantive change in physical education teaching and programs has eluded us. Little of what we know has filtered down to physical education programs in schools...far too many physical education programs are characterized by inappropriate educational practices...lack of attention to national standards, and limited use of available pedagogical strategies to increase levels of student engagement and achievement (p. 443).

In this quotation, Bulger and Housner (2009) recognise that the research findings from these innovative ideas have simply not "filtered down" to teachers working in school settings. To put it differently, there may be a gap between the discussions in, and aspirations of, the existing research literature and the information available and possibilities for practice in school settings.

The idea of ‘Models-Based Practice’ (MBP) has emerged in recent times pulling these diverse models together, to present a compelling way to re-conceptualise teachers’ practice (Casey, 2014; Kirk, 2010, 2012, 2013; Jess and Thorburn, 2015; Metzler, 2011; O’Donovan, 2011; Tannehill, van der Mars, and MacPhail, 2014). Metzler (2011) identifies eight models in the literature with each model individually offering a different way of conceptualising physical education teaching:

1. Direct Instruction.
2. Personalised System for Instruction.
3. Cooperative Learning.
4. Sport Education.
5. Peer Teaching.
6. Inquiry Teaching.
7. Tactical Games.
8. Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility.

Thorpe, Bunker and Almond’s (1986) tactical games model ‘Teaching Games for Understanding’ (TGfU) and Siedentop’s (1994) ‘Sport Education’ model have received the most attention from researchers. More recently, the cooperative learning model has been applied increasingly in physical education contexts (Dyson, 2001; 2002; Dyson and Casey, 2012; Dyson and Rubin, 2003) and interest in health-based models (Haerens *et al.*, 2011; Sallis *et al.*, 2012) has intensified in the literature. Focusing briefly on the two most popular models – TGfU and Sport Education – contemporary scholars have examined these from various theoretical perspectives. Contemporary theories of learning have been a central interest in these research efforts, including: situated learning (Kirk and Macphail, 2002; Kinchin, 2006), constructivism (McCaughtry *et al.*, 2004; Rovegno and Dolly, 2006), and complexity theory (Storey and Butler, 2013; Light, 2008). Generally, the analysis and theoretical interpretations of these two models confirm their potential to provide a platform for viewing pupils as active

learners with the capacity to construct knowledge by exploring their environment and reflecting on their experiences.

Research studies in physical education literature reporting instances of pupils taking responsibility for leading learning situations in classes are less common (Brunton, 2003; Byra, 2006; Kirk, 2010; Tinning, 2010). In discussing research related to what he terms “student-centered” approaches in physical education, Byra (2006) claims that researchers have “just began to expose the ‘tip of the iceberg’” (p. 461). Byra’s comments on “student-centered” approaches relate to a range of specific areas, some of which include peer teaching, self-check styles, and the cooperative learning model. There are some examples in the literature of teachers using ‘reciprocal’ and ‘self-check’ styles (Byra, 2006) and ‘cooperative learning’ (Dyson, 2001; 2002; Dyson and Casey, 2012), with some of the more detailed examples of pupils ‘taking responsibility’ in physical education classes coming from the ‘Sport Education’ model.

Kinchin (2006) informs us that Sport Education promotes pupils taking responsibility in class by using ‘roles’ as a key feature of the model. There has been interest in investigating the use of ‘roles’ within Sport Education (Brunton, 2003; Hastie, 1996). By way of example, pupils take on the role of a player/performer in class, but they also fulfil roles involving organisation or administration in class (e.g. equipment manager, statistician) and leadership of others (e.g. coach, captain). In this way, Kinchin (2006) asserts, “roles [are]...necessary in a Sport Education unit to support a progressive shift in pedagogy from teacher-directed to more pupil-centred instruction...” (p. 598). However, even with these alternative conceptions, scholars contend that physical education teachers rarely move beyond ‘direct’ teaching approaches (Kirk, 2010; Tinning, 2010).

Later chapters of this thesis – Chapters 4 and 5 – present key features from participant teachers’ practices, which challenge the notion of ‘direct’ teaching dominating physical education lessons. The following five framing categories

were constructed to represent the patterns of classroom interaction identified in this study: teacher-directed, teacher-guided, pupil-led, teacher-pupil negotiated, and pupil-initiated practice. However, given the central role that ‘direct’ teaching appears to occupy in the practices of teachers across the profession (Kirk, 2010; Tinning, 2010), it can be difficult to envisage other modes of practice making major contributions to the events that take place in classes. It is important to stress that alongside teacher-directed practice, the present study recognised teacher-guided, pupil-led, teacher-pupil negotiated, and pupil-initiated framing categories as central parts of the participant teachers’ practices. That is to say, these four framing categories are modes of practice in their own right and featured during observation of classes with a similar degree of regularity in comparison to forms of direct teaching.

Meantime, in response to concerns about the prevalence of ‘direct’ teaching, and the limited impact of these innovative practices in school settings (Bulger and Housner, 2009), a particular form of MBP has emerged as the “great white hope” for 21st century physical education (Casey, 2014). The understanding of MBP is that each model (or multiple models) has a particular view of curriculum and instruction placing broader demands on teachers’ practice for the successful implementation of explicit learning intentions (Kirk, 2013). While Kirk (2013) advances a relatively modest interpretation of MBP, several scholars, such as Metzler (2011) and Casey (2014), have argued for teachers to apply MBP *fixedly* with limited scope to make local level adaptations to a model(s). For example, Casey (2014) identifies the following paradox: on the one hand, is MBP a “fixed idea” and a model followed systematically to the end of a unit of work? On the other hand, is MBP a “starting point” and a model that is highly adaptable in a unit of work depending on the demands of the local context? However, even though Casey has identified this paradox, he goes on to claim MBP in a highly adaptable form is “beyond teachers” as he perceives local level modifications are “too complex” and beyond the capabilities of “ordinary teachers”.

While this recent debate provides plausible suggestions for changing existing practices in school settings, I contest adopting this “fixed” notion of MBP as a future direction for the profession. To my mind, this interpretation advances MBP as a ‘super-structure’ with each model being deployed in its entirety and used to control tightly teachers’ practices. In fact, I raise concerns with this “fixed” interpretation of MBP that are similar to the earlier critique that Tinning (2010) levied against Mosston’s spectrum of teaching styles. These interpretations of classroom reality suggest teachers simply implement styles or models as part of their practice, presenting an over-simplistic and “technical” view of teaching in physical education settings (Tinning, 2010).

Another reason for contesting the “fixed” notion of MBP is that I foresee constraints placed upon research designs similar to those recognised by Rovegno (2009) in the teaching styles research. That is to say, research protocols may need to deploy a model in its entirety so researchers can attribute findings to the particular model under investigation. While I acknowledge the need to preserve the fidelity of a model (Hastie and Casey, 2014), the overuse of highly restrictive, experimental research designs carries a potential risk of masking the realities of “real-world teaching” (Rovegno, 2009).

2.5.6.1 Section summary

Preceding paragraphs have demonstrated that the existing research literature consistently reports teachers’ practice as over-reliant on ‘direct’ teaching approaches. In an effort to remediate the apparent limitations of teachers’ classroom practices, contemporary research literature has pulled together a range of existing curriculum and pedagogical models to present a “fixed” interpretation of MBP as the “great white hope” for the physical education profession (Casey, 2014). Alongside the issues raised in the immediately preceding paragraph, I have a final concern regarding Casey’s (2014) prediction that “fixed” notions of MBP will dominate the profession in the future. Similar to the research interest in more established models, such as TGfU and Sport Education, I now envisage an

upsurge of activity pursuing the *effectiveness* of other curriculum and pedagogical models. This MBP research activity will not only overlook the possibility that practising teachers have ideas to share, but it also will forego any research attempts to explore the finer-grained aspects of day-to-day classroom life.

2.6 Conclusion: An ‘Unfair’ Picture and Time for a ‘Fresh’ Conceptualisation

In summary, this chapter has explored various definitions of pedagogy and reviewed the ways in which the research literature has portrayed teachers’ classroom practices. My decision to employ ‘pedagogy’ to guide the research process was justified by pointing up the potential this concept offers for providing a “bigger picture” (Alexander, 2008a) interpretation of teachers’ practice, addressing the schism between teachers’ actions and wider influences identified by LeCompte (2009) and Lee (2003). Thereafter, I explored further the definition of pedagogy provided by Robin Alexander to clarify its strengths and limitations for the present study (Alexander, 2008a, b).

My review of education literature revealed the virtual disappearance of a particular form of “interactionist” research (Atkinson *et al.*, 1988), amidst the dominance of macro-level sociological interests and other quantitatively driven classroom research studies based upon a process-product research design. The decision to revive key insights from the British interactionist research tradition was supported by highlighting the potential for a more dynamic interpretation of classroom life to emerge, especially when juxtaposed with much contemporary research literature. Reviewing the physical education literature also uncovered the prevalence of the process-product research design. This model remains particularly dominant through the systematic analysis of Mosston’s (1966, 1981, 2002) popular teaching styles framework. I justified my decision to adopt a more “naturalistic” stance by highlighting the ways in which the prevalence of highly restrictive research methodologies have created many “illusions” about physical education teaching (Rovegno, 2009). With physical education literature

consistently reporting teachers' practice as over-reliant on 'direct' teaching approaches, I argued this was an 'unfair' picture and it was time for a 'fresh' conceptualisation to emerge.

This review has unveiled several gaps within the literature, revealing the need for a fine-grained research study to investigate classroom practice. With these gaps in mind, I decided to focus the present study on a qualitative approach to classroom research to capture the practices that secondary physical education teachers individually initiate and sustain in their own school contexts.

The next chapter outlines the methodological stance I adopted and the research methods used to investigate six physical education teachers' day-to-day practices in their specific secondary school contexts.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I begin by briefly reiterating the purpose of this thesis and the perceived need for a ‘fresh’ conceptualisation of teachers’ practice. After restating the purpose of this study, I provide a descriptive overview of the pilot study that I conducted in secondary physical education classes. This pilot study experience, and the data it generated, provided me with key insights into teachers’ practices, which informed many of the methodological decisions I made in the current study. Next, I discuss the sampling strategy that guided the recruitment of particular teachers and present the ethical considerations put in place to protect them during the research process. Thereafter, the chapter moves on to present the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of the study and show how they informed research decisions, including data collection and analysis. In discussing data collection and data analysis, I aim to provide a detailed account of the research process to enhance the “visibility” (Mishler, 1990) of my work, enabling the reader to trace the reasoning behind the decisions that I made during *all* stages of the research (Creswell, 2007; Denscombe, 2007). Permeating these discussions will be references to the ways in which I aimed to enhance the “quality” of the research (Silverman, 2010). I end this chapter by drawing together the ways in which I sought to enhance the quality by making specific links to the “validity” (Mishler, 1990), or what some scholars call “credibility” (Charmaz, 2014; Higgs, 2001), of the research findings.

3.2 The Purpose of the Study

LeCompte (2009) highlights the dichotomous nature of educational research, drawing a sharp distinction between research *in* education and research *on* schools and educational phenomena more generally. LeCompte flags up significant limitations on both sides of this dichotomy:

- research *in* education is generally based in the classroom and focuses primarily on the actions of the teacher and pupils, but overlooks the significance of the local and wider economic, social, and political discourses and influences on teachers' practice;
- research *on* education is mainly concerned with the local and wider economic, social, and political discourses and influences on the school and classrooms, but is devoid of information about the actions of the teacher and pupils in the classroom.

Indeed, Lee (2003) identifies parallels between the education research literature and the physical education research literature. To compound the problem, there is an assumption that our understanding of physical education teachers' practice in the classroom is already well known and established. There is much that is 'taken-for-granted' (Sicilia-Camacho and Brown, 2008; Tinning, 2010) and there are many "illusions" (Rovegno, 2009).

These issues triggered the present research study. To avoid locating the study in one-half of the research dichotomy described by LeCompte (2009) and Lee (2003), I set out to construct a fine-grained picture of what teachers do in practice, but at the same time wished to capture the purposes and contextual demands shaping these actions. However, in pursuing this form of research, I am mindful of the following challenge raised in the previous chapter: "[t]eaching and learning are complex, highly diverse, and frequently individualistic phenomena" (LeCompte, 2009, p. 25). If we accept teachers' practice as a "complex", "diverse", and "individualistic" endeavour, then this presents major implications for the form of research required in this study. Arguably, then, not only is it *highly unlikely* to fully apprehend the complexity at play in an *individual* teacher's day-to-day practice, but also it may be *impossible* to document this *across* a sample of teachers' day-to-day practices. When faced with this dilemma, Robinson (2010) was a major source of inspiration. Drawing on the work of Smeyers (2001), she maintains that simply because aspects of educational research are:

...highly complex, constantly emerging and very difficult to capture, the inability to understand everything should not be equated with the inability to understand anything (p. 80).

Robinson's dictum simultaneously prepared me to acknowledge *and* tolerate the inherent difficulties of educational research. Rather than trying to overlook or eliminate the complex and diverse nature of teachers' practice, I set out to acknowledge it openly whilst being mindful that I would be unable to fully understand everything. I recognise that each teacher's day-to-day practice will be highly "individualistic" and his or her local context will be "diverse" when compared to others (LeCompte, 2009).

Going into the field and documenting how teachers work in their specific contexts is an effective way to acknowledge the contrasts and similarities across their practice and their school contexts (Atkinson *et al.*, 2003; Delamont, 1983; Delamont, 2012a, b). Given the demands of this task, as a researcher, I needed to ensure that "...an open mind is not an empty head" (Dey 1993, p.229). In other words, I needed to develop a "heuristic device" (Scott and Marshall, 2009) *and* some "sensitizing concepts" (Blumer, 1969; Charmaz, 2005, 2014; Dey, 1993) to avoid the impossible task of gathering everything and anything from teachers' practice. There is little discernible difference between a 'heuristic device' and what Blumer (1969) and colleagues refer to as a 'sensitizing concept'. However, I want to make a distinction between these two terms in this study, as I employed them in slightly different ways. According to Scott and Marshall (2009), a heuristic device is "...an artificial construct to assist in the exploration of social phenomena" (p. 307). I want to acknowledge that a heuristic device is merely a 'rough guide' or a 'rule of thumb' to guide the research proceedings. I use the term 'heuristic device' in this study to refer to a general concept that guided my research questions and the research process. 'Pedagogy' is the heuristic device used in this study. I will discuss my use of sensitizing concepts later in this chapter.

Using a heuristic device, such as pedagogy, enabled me to build some very loose boundaries around this open ended and exploratory study. I employed this device to guide my own thinking about teachers' practice and to inform my analysis and data gathering efforts. This interest in researching both teachers' actions, and the associated purposes and contextual demands framing these practices, led me to Alexander's (2008b) conceptualisation of 'pedagogy'. Therefore, this study used pedagogy in a *heuristic way* to guide the research process; this stance was not to provide a definitive account of 'what *is* taking place', but rather a means for investigating 'what *may be* taking place' as part of physical education teachers' practice in schools.

My research questions materialised around the concern to bridge the dualism in education and physical education research literature. Drawing upon insights from Alexander's (2008b) definition of pedagogy, it was necessary to formulate research questions that made connections between the actions teachers displayed in the classroom and the purposes and contextual influences shaping these practices, allowing for a more nuanced account of teachers' professional capabilities in comparison to the majority of past research studies. The research questions guiding this study are:

1. What are the key features of these physical education teachers' day-to-day actions in the classroom?
2. What are the purposes and contextual influences that inform and shape these physical education teachers' practices?

3.3 The Pilot Study: An Overview

It is necessary at this early stage in the chapter to provide a brief overview of the pilot work I conducted prior to undertaking this current research study. My pilot study is referred to throughout this chapter and presenting an account here will illustrate how the data it generated informed the decisions I made in the current study.

The main aim of my pilot work was to get a sense of what teachers were doing in their classes. This agenda may seem quite basic, but it stemmed from my dissatisfaction with the contemporary research literature. Given that this thesis has highlighted the lack of empirical evidence documenting Scottish teachers' practices, coupled with the 'unfair' conception of teaching presented in the international literature, the decision to observe teachers 'in-action' with classes in a pilot study appeared to be a crucial starting point. It enabled me to look at teachers' practices from a researcher's perspective and to start building a picture of day-to-day life in school classrooms.

The pilot study involved observing six physical education teachers working in three separate Scottish secondary schools⁷: Gaynor, Albert, and Carrie at Hawthorn High School; Kelvin and Fergus at Whickham's High School; Gina at Pennell High School. I gained access to these teachers as I have longstanding friendships with all of them: they are either former teaching colleagues or peers from my undergraduate studies. I made contact by telephoning these teachers and asking if they would be willing to let me observe them working with their classes. Starting in early-March 2012 and continuing until late-June 2012, I completed ten observations: three with Gaynor, two each with Albert and Kelvin, and one each with Carrie, Fergus, and Gina.

An initial finding of the pilot study was the distinct ways in which the teachers across this sample were working with the pupils in their classes. I documented the features that each teacher displayed in his or her practice and I recognised there was a degree of contrast when comparing the participants taking part in the study. I continued to track the interactions of the teachers and pupils to separate out these 'types of teachers' together with documenting the features associated with these different ways of working. Close analysis of observation transcripts revealed distinctions across this group of teachers:

⁷ I use pseudonyms here to protect the identity of the teachers and schools that took part in the pilot study.

- Kelvin and Fergus took an active lead over the pupils during lessons;
- Carrie and Albert asked a number of different questions and provided space for the pupils to respond during lessons;
- Gaynor debated with the pupils in her classes until they decided the direction of travel for a lesson or future lesson;
- Gina responded sensitively to the ideas of the pupils during the act of teaching and adapted her lessons accordingly.

I respectively formulated four categories – teacher-directed, teacher-guided, teacher-pupil negotiated, and pupil initiated – to capture the different ‘types of teachers’ observed during the pilot study.

The findings from the pilot study were invaluable. I gained a clear sense of the different ‘types of teachers’ working in school settings and insights into the forms of interaction displayed in their practices. This provided a clear focus for my observations of teachers’ practices in the current study. The four categories derived from my pilot work were employed as ‘sensitizing concepts’ during my observations of teachers’ classes. An earlier section made a clear distinction between a ‘heuristic device’ and ‘sensitizing concepts’. Whilst there is little discernible difference between these in the literature, I specifically viewed a ‘heuristic device’ as broad ranging in nature and explained how pedagogy was used in this way to guide the current study. In contrast, ‘sensitizing concepts’ were used in this study as second-order concepts and, while not overarching concepts, they played a crucial role in facilitating the interpretation of meanings and explaining my data in relation to teacher-pupil interaction. The four ‘types of teachers’ derived from my pilot work were used as sensitizing concepts to inform my initial data gathering efforts, ensuring I had a clear focus of attention in the early stages of the current study. Later sections of this chapter will return to these ‘sensitizing concepts’, explaining how a sustained period of observation indicated the need to re-orient these ideas.

Another benefit of my pilot work for the present study was the specific criteria it offered for the sampling of participants. In recruiting participants, I was able to select purposively ‘types of teachers’ displaying features in their practice that were distinct from others in the sample to generate a broad theoretical framework. In the next section of this chapter, I explain the ways in which these ‘types of teachers’ were a foregrounding interest of the sampling process.

3.4 Sampling: Recruiting ‘Appropriate’ Participants

The general aim of this study has been to generate a framework to explain physical education teachers’ practice. Recruiting ‘appropriate’ participants to inform this framework was crucial and this study set out with a clear sampling strategy (Silverman, 2010). ‘Purposive’ sampling was useful for my research because participant selection could specifically address the needs of the research questions (Esterberg, 2002). The following sections will make clear the criteria guiding the selection of teachers to participate in my research study.

3.4.1 What is in the foreground?

My intention was not to select teachers as a representative sample of the whole teaching population. Rather, I sought to recruit teachers whose practice would directly inform my research questions, but at the same time, I was mindful of the effect this selection process could have on the credibility of any theoretical framework constructed during this study. Two main areas of concern were in the foreground of the sampling process. Firstly, teachers were purposively selected to provide an opportunity to study *different* key features of practice; incorporating teachers who individually displayed contrasting features in their practice allowed for a broad theoretical framework to emerge. My pilot work identified four ‘types of teachers’ each displaying contrasting patterns of teacher-pupil interaction in classrooms: teacher-directed, teacher-guided, teacher-pupil negotiated, and pupil-initiated practices. Based on these pilot study findings, I decided to include teachers displaying a tendency towards a *different* interaction category in their

day-to-day practice. In other words, my foregrounding interest was to ensure variety across a small sample by including participants displaying features in their practice that were distinct from those of the other participants.

Secondly, teachers were selected with one *commonality* in mind: they were ‘highly competent’ practitioners of physical education. I acknowledge that some readers may question the relevance of this criteria. Accordingly, it is necessary here to provide a rationale for my decision to include ‘highly competent’ teachers within this study. My research aimed to construct a theoretical framework to explain physical education teachers’ practice. I specifically included ‘highly competent’ teachers to inform this framework so I could be reasonably confident that the findings emerged from practitioners of comparable levels of professional ability. Simply put, I aimed to minimise the possibility that the variation captured across these teachers’ practices was based on differing levels of professional ability. From this position, I believed using teachers identified as highly skilled in their teaching ability increased the potential for the study to be interpreted as credible by physical education teachers working in Scotland and beyond.

I gauged the professional competence of participants in the following ways:

- I was guided in part by the experience and outcomes of my pilot work;
- I relied on my professional judgement to recruit former colleagues;
- I used a combination of academic staff and/or undergraduate students at the University of Edinburgh to act as ‘key informants’ concerning certain teachers’ practice;
- I asked colleagues at Education Scotland⁸ (such as National Development Officers and HMIE Inspectors) to identify highly skilled teachers practising in Scottish physical education departments.

⁸ ‘Education Scotland’ is an organisation that unites several support teams to enhance the quality of Scottish education. These support teams include: Her Majesty’s Inspectorate for Education (HMIE), whose remit is to evaluate the quality of provision from pre-school through to further education across all local authorities in Scotland; teams of National Development Officers to advance forms of practice in specific curriculum areas; and various working groups to investigate possible solutions to recognised development needs in Scottish education more generally.

In making decisions about the effectiveness of teachers' practice, I regarded Boote's (2006) concept of "professional discretion" as a useful way to frame the standard I was looking for in my study. Drawing upon Boote's concept, which is based on a teacher's ability to be *responsive* to the demands of the pupils and the social context in which they work, I identified criteria for an 'effective practitioner framework'. This framework involved reflecting upon, (and questioning other people and sources), whether the degree of challenge, lesson progression, relevance and safety were 'well-judged' by the teacher, and if their practice was approached from an 'informed' perspective in relation to the needs of the pupils, the school, and local community.

Before discussing the specific ways in which this 'effective practitioner framework' was used to appraise individual teachers' professional effectiveness, it is necessary to acknowledge areas that were of a secondary concern in the recruitment of participants. For instance, using the 'framework' listed above, I identified 12 – 15 teachers as *possible* participants in my research; that is, I located a collection of highly competent teachers showing variety in, and across, the four interaction categories – teacher-directed, teacher-guided, teacher-pupil negotiation, and pupil-initiated practice – identified in the pilot study. Given that I was aiming to recruit a small number of these teachers, I further considered the range of participants in my sample. Using these 12 – 15 teachers, I decided to incorporate six teachers in my study with *some* varying personal characteristics (age, gender, duration of service) and contrasting school demographics (socio-economic status, urban-rural locations, size of school roll). I will discuss these in more detail in the next section.

3.4.2 *What is in the background?*

While the main concern in the sampling process was to select highly competent teachers with variety in their practice, I was also eager to include, as far as possible, teachers with contrasting personal characteristics and school contexts. As a lone researcher it is important to point out I was unable to travel extensive

distances. Nevertheless, as I will explain in more detail in the immediately following section, the six teachers I recruited for the present study were quite *different* from each other in several ways. Table 3-1 provides a descriptive overview of each teacher and his or her school demographics.

Table 3-1: Sampling Matrix⁹

	Gaynor	Seymour	Jessie	Erika	Stanley	Roddy
TEACHER						
Gender						
Male		X			X	X
Female	X		X	X		
Age						
20 – 29 years	X			X		
30 – 39 years					X	X
40 – 49 years		X				
50 – 59 years			X			
Length of Service						
0 – 3 years				X		X
4 – 7 years	X					
8 – 15 years					X	
16 – 23 years		X				
24 + years			X			
Position in School						
Main Grade Teacher	X			X	X	X
Principal Teacher/Faculty Head		X	X			
SCHOOL						
Socio Economic Status* (*based on the free school meal (FSM) entitlement)						
FSM: below national average of 15.5%			X	X	X	X
FSM: above national average of 15.5%	X	X				
School Location						
Small Urban (>10K population)	X	X		X	X	
Large Urban (>125K population)			X			X
Size of School* (*in relation to school role)						
Medium (500-1000 pupils)	X	X	X	X		
Large (>1000 pupils)					X	X

⁹ Data relating to the ‘teacher’ in this sampling matrix have been drawn from the participant background form that all participant teachers completed (see Appendix A). Data relating to ‘school’ information in this sampling matrix have been drawn from the following sources: Scottish Government (2012) and Education Scotland (2012)

Data in Table 3-1 show how these teachers were working in different schools, some within different local authorities, with varying socio-economic status and urban-rural locations; they had differing durations of service; some held promoted posts, while others were main grade teachers; some of the teachers were male, and some female. According to Patton (2015), a “maximum variation” approach to sampling in a small scale research study can illuminate “important shared patterns that cut across cases and derive significance from having emerged out of heterogeneity” (p. 172). The variation then, across the sample in this present study enabled common patterns of classroom interactions to emerge from a diverse range of teachers working in quite different school contexts. While my decision to maximise the variation across the sample in this study was to uncover any shared patterns of classroom interaction, it was *not* my intention to make this diversity a key driver of my analysis in later chapters. In other words, I will not be extensively comparing and contrasting these classifications (i.e., between male and female teachers or large urban and small urban schools) to present the effects on teacher-pupil interaction in classrooms.

3.4.3 *Participants: who is ‘in’ and who is ‘out’?*

Sampling is an inherently ‘messy’ process. Initially I intended to retain the majority of teachers who participated in the pilot study. A combination of several factors resulted in only one teacher being retained from the pilot study. I have often pondered over those teachers who were unable to participate. What would these teachers’ experiences have offered the study? How might their inclusion have influenced and altered my interpretations of teachers’ worlds? My pilot study emphasised the need for flexibility in data gathering to accommodate the dynamic nature of the research process (Boeije, 2010). As such, I intended to be responsive to the number of participants needed and the date, time, and location of all data gathering. The following paragraphs provide an overview of the participants recruited for this study and the ways in which I employed the ‘effective practitioner framework’ outlined earlier to gauge their suitability in relation to levels of professional effectiveness and the key features inherent in their practice.

Gaynor is a former teaching colleague of mine. We worked together for three years in a secondary school physical education department from 2006 - 2009. In this setting, we had opportunities to plan, deliver and assess some classes in a 'team teaching' arrangement. Moreover, Gaynor was in the cohort of teachers who took part in the pilot study; that is, I also had the opportunity to view her practice from a researcher's perspective. Hence, I had a clear awareness of her practice. I used my own professional judgement to ensure that she met the criteria set out in the 'effective practitioner framework'. From this intimate understanding of Gaynor's work, I was aware of the particular features in her practice that aligned with teacher-pupil negotiation and teacher guided practices. In other words, there was a tendency for the practices that featured in her lessons to be largely driven through the processes of questioning and negotiation between the teacher and pupils.

Similarly, Seymour is a former teaching colleague. We worked together for six years in a secondary school physical education department from 2003 - 2009. As we are both male teachers we were regularly timetabled (almost on a daily basis) to 'team teach' large groups of boys' classes. Unlike Gaynor, I did not include Seymour in the cohort of teachers who took part in the pilot study as my understanding of his practice was already well-formed from our daily teaching encounters over a six-year period. Seymour has been included in the study for his 'effective' teaching ability and I used my own professional judgement to establish that he met the guiding criteria set out in the 'effective practitioner framework'. He was also included as a teacher who was recognised as tending to deploy a form of teacher-directed practice.

I met Erika in 2003 when I was working as a teacher in a school and she was a pupil in the upper secondary years. She secured a place as a student on the BEd Physical Education course at the University of Edinburgh in 2009. When I was appointed at the University of Edinburgh, Erika was in her final year of studies. While I did not directly lead any classes with final year students at that time, several members of University staff commented positively on Erika's

development during her studies. Upon graduation in 2010, Erika was employed within the same local authority where I used to work and she quickly became regarded locally as a highly skilled practitioner. I telephoned the principal teacher in Erika's department to enquire further about her practice, verifying she was an 'effective practitioner' with teacher-directed and teacher-guided features displayed in her practice.

Having recruited three teachers from my own understanding of their practice, I considered alternate means of informing the sampling process. Working at the University of Edinburgh as a Teaching Fellow gave me access to the lecturing staff and the undergraduate students on the BEd physical education course. I also liaised with colleagues at Education Scotland and Quality Improvement Officers (QIOs) in several local authorities. Consulting with the staff and/or students at the University, colleagues at Education Scotland, and various QIOs identified a number of highly skilled teachers as possible participants. Using the 'effective practitioner framework' explained earlier provided a means for guiding these discussions. The names of several teachers reappeared in these discussions with various informants and I purposively selected three more teachers for my study. From these sources, I gained insight into the respect these colleagues had for the abilities of a teacher identified in this thesis as Jessie. I telephoned Jessie and we had interesting discussions about physical education, her ideas about teaching, the school context in which she works, and the work of her department. Through the comments of lecturing staff, students' placement experiences, and my discussions with Jessie, I established a clear picture of her practice. She was also purposively selected based on the teacher-guided nature of her practice.

A colleague at Education Scotland specifically mentioned the highly skilled practice of a teacher identified here as Roddy. In fact, the work of his whole department has been 'showcased' across the country by Education Scotland as an example of 'effective' practice. As such, I approached the principal teacher of this department at a physical education conference in December 2012 and explained the intentions of my research. He expressed an interest in my study and

recommended that Roddy would ‘fit’ the demands of my research. Roddy has been included in the study as his practice aligns with the aspirations of Education Scotland and current policy expectations, he aims to develop pupils’ participation, responsibility and leadership by working in a pupil-initiated way. Roddy was thus selected for the study, as he is an effective teacher actively applying pupil-initiated practice to work with the pupils in his classes.

Finally, I met Stanley whilst completing my undergraduate degree at the University of Edinburgh from 1999 – 2003. I have remained in contact with him throughout my teaching career. During academic seminars at the University of Edinburgh, several students had commented on Stanley’s ‘effective’ teaching that they had observed on school-based teaching placements. Stanley was recruited due to his effective practice and particular key features related to teacher-directed practice and teacher-guided practice.

Having selected these six teachers to take part in my study, the next section will present the ethical practices I put in place to protect them throughout the research process.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

As a researcher, I was aware of the privileged position granted to me by each of the participants agreeing to take part in this research study. Stake (2003) summarises this position most effectively:

...researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world. Their manner should be good and their code of ethics strict (p. 154).

In relation to a code of ethics, this study was conducted in accordance with the principles for educational research outlined by the British Education Research Association (BERA, 2012). In other words, my prime concern was to protect the participants from “harm or loss, and...to preserve their psychological well-being and dignity” (Willig, 2003, pp. 18-19). (In addition to this, as the research was

taking place in schools, I went through the necessary criminal records investigations and received a 'Protecting Vulnerable Groups' statement from Disclosure Scotland.) Several procedures were put in place to protect the teachers and the pupils involved in this study.

When approaching teachers to take part in this research I provided information sheets via email detailing the aims and intentions of the study (see Appendix B). The teachers were invited to take part only after clearly understanding the importance, purpose, research design, and data collection methods (BERA, 2012). If the teachers intimated that they were interested in taking part in the research, I organised an initial visit to their school at a convenient time. I used this initial meeting to reiterate the aims and methods of the study and to secure informed consent from the teachers (see Appendix C). After gaining informed consent, all teachers were notified of the ways in which they would be treated fairly and sensitively (BERA, 2012).

I endeavoured to acknowledge the rights of the participants throughout this study; and there were indeed times when I had to be responsive to the needs and work place conditions of the participant teachers. On some occasions, teachers contacted me to change a scheduled observation or ask for several weeks' break from the observations due to their busy work commitments. I was flexible and responsive to these requests and renegotiated the timing and regularity of observations. I also reminded the participant teachers that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence (BERA, 2012). The right to withdraw from the study was an area I strongly emphasised to the participants, as I wanted them to be comfortable and fully engaged with the research.

Additionally, this study was not only concerned with gaining informed consent from participant teachers. I would be in the private space of the classroom where the pupils would be a major part of the research. The ethical guidelines set out by BERA (2012) have an expectation for gaining informed consent from children:

...children who are capable of forming their own views should be granted the right to express their views freely in all matters affecting them, commensurate with their age and maturity. Children should therefore be facilitated to give fully informed consent (p. 6).

Hence, it was necessary to seek consent from the children themselves as well as from the parents regarding their child's participation. When attending the initial meeting with teachers, I took along several versions of the parent and pupil consent forms and sought guidance on the format and language used to explain the research. The participant teachers generally shared these with their principal teacher and/or head teacher and sent suggested changes to me via email after a few days. The teachers distributed these forms to all pupils in their S1-3 classes (see Appendix D for an example). The majority of parents and pupils agreed to take part in the study. For instances where a parent and pupil did not consent to take part in the research, these pupils still remained part of the class, but their actions and comments were omitted from the fieldnotes.

Throughout data collection, I protected the confidentiality and anonymity of the teachers, pupils and their schools at all times. At the outset of the study, pseudonyms were developed to protect the identity of teachers and the schools at which they work. As the research unfolded, pseudonyms were developed for the pupils who repeatedly featured in the notes made during classes¹⁰. I used pseudonyms in writing up all documents associated with the research. In reporting the findings of this study in this thesis, these pseudonyms have been retained; I am the only person to know the pseudonyms used and the identities of teachers, pupils, and their schools. All data were stored securely: electronic data were stored on a password-protected computer and all hard copies of data were stored in a lockable unit in my office at the University of Edinburgh. I was the only person to

¹⁰ I only focused on specific pupils and tracked their ongoing exchanges and experiences in the fieldnotes where it was necessary to enhance the narrative. Using pseudonyms for these pupils was a useful way to keep track of these developments over time. In general, I was able to refer to pupils in a transient way and there was limited need to generate a pseudonym for all pupils.

know the electronic password to my computer and I was the sole key holder of the secure unit.

However, there were on-going challenges in guaranteeing anonymity to the participant teachers. In recruiting two former colleagues, there were participants in the study who knew each other and I realised I could not prevent the participant teachers themselves revealing to each other that they were taking part in this research study. In addition, there were instances where a participant teacher informed a mutual acquaintance of ours in the physical education world that he was involved in the research study. With limited research of this form being undertaken in Scottish physical education, it may not be too challenging for people with this knowledge to infer the identity of a participant. For instance, if someone was cognizant of a participant's involvement in the study, it may be possible to unravel the pseudonyms used and identify a participant through a process of elimination. This development was not something I foresaw at the outset of the research. In turning to the research literature for advice, I discovered that maintaining anonymity in 21st century research is inherently problematic (Tilley and Woodthorpe, 2011). To address the demands of my specific situation, I made the decision to refrain from referring to other participants when I was with each of the participant teachers and limited comments were made when I was asked by mutual acquaintances about the teachers who were taking part the study. Whilst everything in my power was done to prevent the identification of the participant teachers and their school in this study, I would be more reticent about guaranteeing anonymity in future studies.

As mentioned earlier, some of the participant teachers were former colleagues and peers from my undergraduate studies. I acknowledge then that I have pre-existing friendships with Gaynor, Stanley, and Seymour. Stacey's (1991 cited in Goldstein, 2000) comments that researcher-participant friendships can be "manipulative and dangerous" (p. 522) were an initial concern. My concerns related to the fact that I wanted to avoid manipulating any participant and I especially wanted to prevent jeopardising longstanding friendships. Whilst there is much debate in the

qualitative research literature about negotiating and managing friendships established *in the field*, Taylor (2011) contends that there is limited research specifically examining the ethics of *pre-existing* friendships. Drawing on some of Taylor's (2011) advice relating to the negotiation of *pre-existing* friendships, the aims and intentions of the research were made clear to these participants and we discussed the "rules of engagement" (p. 13) to distinguish between our roles as participant-friend and researcher-friend. At the core of these "rules of engagement" was a commitment to be honest and share areas of concern related to our friendship if or when these emerged during the research process. Over time, Taylor's (2011) advice was also a useful way to manage the friendships established *in the field* with Erika, Roddy and Jessie.

3.6 Research Design

Having explained how the participants were recruited and set out the ethical considerations put in place, this section moves on to discuss aspects of research design. There is often confusion and contestation when discussing research design and methodological issues in the social sciences (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003; Crotty, 1998; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Much of the confusion relates to the terminology used in the literature (Crotty, 1998). To bring a degree of order and consistency to the discussions that follow, I align with Crotty's (1998) four elements of the research process: theoretical perspectives, epistemology, methodology, and methods. I provide a clear overview of the distinctions and interconnection(s) between each of these four elements to establish a foundation for the discussions that follow:

- theoretical perspectives¹¹ are the philosophical positions that provided the grounding logic for my methodology in this study;

¹¹ My interpretation of 'theoretical perspective' harmonizes with Crotty's (1998), which views debates about ontology as inextricably linked with theory. By not explicitly listing ontology here, I am not omitting it from the discussions that follow.

- epistemology relates to my assumptions about knowledge and the nature of the world, which had implications for the theoretical and methodological elements of the study;
- methodology is the approach that underpinned my choice and use of methods;
- methods are the techniques or ‘tools’ that I used to collect and gather data.

3.7 Theoretical Perspective and Epistemology

There is much contestation and debate in the research literature regarding the merits of different philosophical positions for conducting research (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003; Bryman, 2012; Guba and Lincoln, 2005; Macdonald *et al.*, 2002; Maxwell, 2013; O’Sullivan, 2007). Many scholars writing about research prefer to use the term ‘research paradigm’ (Esterberg, 2002; Guba and Lincoln, 2005) to denote a *specific* philosophical position for conducting a study; and much of the educational research literature has been marked by scholars arguing the superiority of one paradigm over another in the so-called “paradigm wars” (Gage 1989). There have been similar debates in physical education (see a discussion of this issue in Macdonald *et al.* (2002) and O’Sullivan (2007)). The use of the term ‘paradigm’ continues in contemporary research, but more recently some scholars have shifted to use the term ‘theoretical perspective’ (see Crotty, 1998; Macdonald *et al.*, 2002; Maxwell, 2013). While this shift in terminology use may appear to be relatively minor, it represents a community of scholars willing to adopt a *broad* philosophical position to investigate research problems, informed by their “*assumptions* brought to the research task” (Crotty, 1998, p. 7, emphasis added).

The term ‘theoretical perspective’ is favoured in this thesis to portray the flexible and adaptable ways in which I investigated the research problem (Bryman, 2012; Hammersley, 1992a; Luker, 2008; Maxwell, 2013). Maxwell (2013) effectively captures the merits (and challenges) of adopting this stance to guide the practices of data collection and data analysis:

...rather than being unified sets of premises that strongly shape the practice of particular communities of scholars, [theoretical perspectives] function instead as heuristics, conceptual and practical resources that are used to solve specific problems in theory and research...The key idea [of adopting a theoretical perspective instead of aligning with a research paradigm] is that rather than developing a logically consistent plan in advance and then systematically using the materials and tools that the plan and the norms of the community prescribe...[the researcher] spontaneously adapts to the situation, creatively employing the available tools...to come up with unique solutions to a problem (pp. 42-43).

The preceding passage illuminates how adopting a ‘perspective’ instead of aligning with a ‘paradigm’ affords priority to the research problem under investigation. Macdonald *et al.* (2002) identify several theoretical perspectives explicitly informing research in physical education; these include the positivist perspective, the interpretivist perspective, the socially critical perspective, the poststructuralist perspective, and feminist perspectives. These can be summarised in the following ways:

- The positivist perspective has origins in the natural sciences. Its purpose is to report facts, predict behaviour, and establish causality through the use of objective measurement;
- The interpretivist perspective is concerned with the way in which an individual or collective group actively construct ‘meanings’ through their actions and behaviours;
- Socially critical, feminist, and poststructuralist research perspectives generally interrogate inequalities and injustices. They bring a ‘critical’ lens to the social world aiming to uncover how these inequalities and injustices come to operate in specific contexts and set out to stimulate people’s awareness to promote emancipation and change.

Thus far, my discussion of theoretical perspectives has presented these as more flexible and adaptable in nature in comparison to research paradigms. I can see the merit in most of the theoretical perspectives outlined in the immediately preceding passage. However, not all were suitable for my research purpose and the questions

I wanted to answer. I set out to provide a fine-grained understanding of teachers' practice and this needed a theoretical perspective that would best 'fit' the research problem. As this research study is interested in understanding teachers' practice, I want to put aside the socially critical, poststructural, and feminist perspectives in my discussions that follow. In Chapter 2 I argued that we have yet to gain a 'fresh' conceptualisation of teachers' practice let alone trying to interrogate teachers' practice to instigate emancipation and change. Using these perspectives may be a worthwhile research direction in the future. This leaves the positivist and interpretivist perspectives as possibilities for my research.

Central to understanding the merits of any theoretical perspective are the undergirding assumptions related to the nature of reality, ontology, and the nature of knowledge, epistemology. Ontology cues us to think about how we view reality and the nature of the world. On the one hand, is the world objective in nature in the sense that we can see it, experience it, and quantify it? On the other hand, is the world subjective in nature in the sense that we construct it, constantly change it, and recognise it is highly different for different people? Essentially, what I have outlined here are polar opposite positions on the ontological continuum that range from a realist stance at one end to a relativist stance at the other (see Figure 3-1).



Figure 3-1: The Ontological Continuum

While multiple ontological positions co-exist between these two extremes (Bryman, 2012; Esterberg, 2002), a realist stance is a key part of the positivist

theoretical perspective and a relativist stance is a key part of the interpretivist theoretical perspective. However, it is difficult to consider ontology without discussing epistemology; the two go hand-in-hand (Crotty, 1998).

Epistemology prompts us to consider the nature and quality of knowledge generated from our research: on the one hand, is knowledge an absolute, objective ‘truth’ that the researcher can discover? On the other hand, is knowledge an expression of multiple ‘truths’ that are constructed from the beliefs and experiences within and between the researcher and the researched? In many respects, what I have outlined is a tension between knowledge as an expression of one ‘truth’ in the form of facts or a grand theory and knowledge as an expression of multiple ‘truths’ that are constructed out of the realities of an individual’s or collective group’s beliefs and experiences (see Figure 3-2). Generally, a search for one ‘truth’ is the domain of the positivist theoretical perspective and a construction of multiple ‘truths’ is the domain of the interpretivist theoretical perspective.

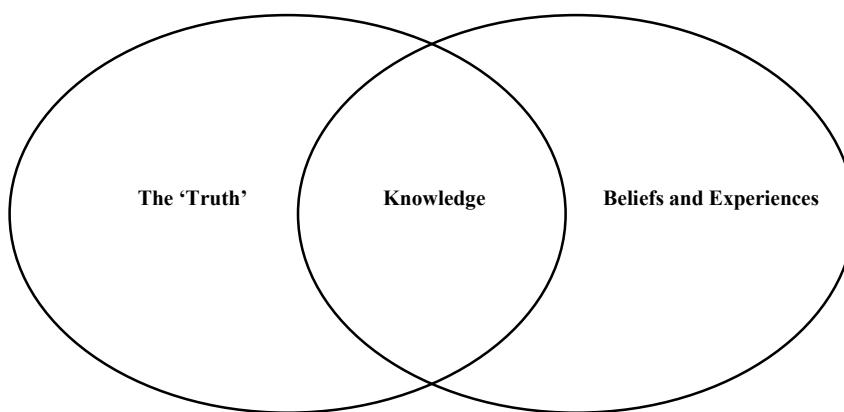


Figure 3-2: Discovering the ‘Truth’ versus Constructing Multiple Truths

My research problem generally suited an interpretivist perspective to investigate teachers’ practice. For example, interpretivist research accepts that participants live in multiple realities, have contrasting experiences and are located in a

particular socio-cultural and historical context (Cohen *et al.*, 2011; Crotty, 1998). It holds that individuals or groups of people actively create, maintain, negotiate, and transform meanings in the social world (Schwandt, 2003). Thus, the interpretivist researcher accepts that a reality exists that is shaped and constructed by an individual or collective group (Silverman, 2006a).

However, I am not merely content with situating the study within the interpretivist theoretical perspective. This perspective has become too broad and convoluted to explain my theoretical perspective on its own (Schwandt, 2003). As I mentioned earlier, there are multiple positions that co-exist on the realist-relativist continuum and various ways to represent the nature of ‘knowledge’. This study was also *guided* by two philosophical positions that have their roots in the interpretivist theoretical perspective; that is, symbolic interactionism and social constructionism. I will provide a brief account of the key tenets of these two philosophical positions in the following sections to foreground links to my methodology and methods.

3.7.1 *Symbolic interactionism: an overview*

Symbolic interactionism is a form of interpretivism and shares similar views with constructionism (Charon, 2007; Schwandt, 2003). Using the words of Blumer (1969), we get an insight into symbolic interactionism:

...the actual group life of human beings...consists of what they experience and do, individually and collectively...it covers the large complexes of *interlaced activities* that grow up as the actions of some spread out to affect the actions of others; and it embodies the large variety of *relations between the participants*...The empirical social world...is the world of everyday experience, the top layers of which we see in our lives and recognise in the lives of others. The life of human society...consists of the action and experience of people as they meet the *situations that arise* in their respective worlds (p. 35, emphasis added).

As this quotation implies, symbolic interactionism is concerned with the performed and visible *actions* that we see in our everyday lives and when actions

are performed in concert with others, we can talk about *interactions*. By taking a particular view of interaction – it is an “interlaced” process, it depends on “relations” between people, and there is a need for these actions to correspond with various “situations that arise” – symbolic interaction places direct emphasis on interaction as a unit of study. It focuses our attention on the nature of interaction and relationships taking place between people in a particular place and space. According to Blumer (1969), using symbolic interactionism as a way of thinking and interpreting human interaction is based upon three basic premises: human behaviour is based upon meanings; meanings emerge out of social interactions; meanings are created and evolve through a process of interpretation (Blumer, 1969).

It is Blumer’s (1969) views of *interpretation* that distinguish symbolic interactionism as a particular form of interpretivist research:

...the actor indicates to himself the things towards which he is acting...the things that have meaning. The making of such indications is an internalized social process in that the actor is interacting with himself...by virtue of this process of communicating with himself, interpretation becomes a matter of handling meanings...in the light of the situation in which he is placed and the direction of his action (p. 5).

According to Blumer then, human beings have the capacity to interact towards themselves as individuals, (they can think and prepare actions), as well as in relation to others, (they can anticipate or adopt the perspective of other people or groups of people), to forge an appropriate line of action. This capacity for interpretation enables a human being to perform actions based on what he or she has *perceived* to be appropriate behaviour for a given situation. Thus, interactionism presents a particular view of human behaviour: it is self-determined; it is emergent in nature; it is linked to social interactions and a person’s definition of a situation provides the impetus for a line of action (Blumer, 1969; Maines, 2001; Charon, 2007; Manning and Smith, 2010; McCall, 2003). A valuable insight for the present thesis is the way in which interactionism directly

engages with *how* our (inter)actions construct meaning in the social world based on the relationships that are developed and maintained between people.

3.7.2 Social constructionism: an overview

In common with the interpretivist perspective, social constructionism generally accepts that meanings are created, maintained, negotiated and transformed by people in the social world (Schwandt, 2003). Social constructionism has a philosophical grounding in Berger and Luckmann's (1966) views of a "socially constructed reality" where the 'everyday' interactions between various people are a key part of the construction process. These everyday interactions develop routines in our thinking and patterns in our actions and behaviour (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). From this perspective, reality is considered as both subjective and objective in nature: it is subjective in terms of the ways in which the interactions that take place between people can shape and re-shape interpretations of everyday life; it is objective in terms of the ways in which everyday life can work to habitualize and routinize people's behavior.

Berger and Luckmann (1966) posit that conversations between people are the key to maintaining, negotiating and transforming the social world. They explain that the social world is founded upon a collection of concepts, which are shared and understood through conversation. Developing a set of concepts to construe the social world ensures communication can take place without the need to continually (re)create a shared understanding between people (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Important for this thesis is the way in which constructionism draws attention to how 'meaning' in the social world is predicated upon the interactions that take place between people. Whilst constructionists view knowledge as created rather than discovered, they contend that the construction of knowledge corresponds to what people assume is a 'real' world (Schwandt, 2003). For instance, people construct concepts, beliefs, and ideas but these correspond to something perceived as 'real'; that is, everyday life.

3.7.3 Section summary

Symbolic interactionism and social constructionism both view a reality that is *defined* as ‘real’ or *perceived* as ‘real’, but people do *not* directly access an objective, ‘real’ world. When seen through these interpretive lenses, teachers’ practice in this study was viewed as both emergent and routinized in nature while specifically linked to the extant demands presented in their day-to-day practice. Given that symbolic interactionism highlights interaction as a unit of analysis, and the potential for social constructionism to trace the shared concepts and meanings, these philosophical positions provide a means to access the constructed worlds of the participants in this study.

There are major connections between the position I have adopted here and Hammersley’s (1992b) description of a “subtle realist” position (see Figure 3-3).

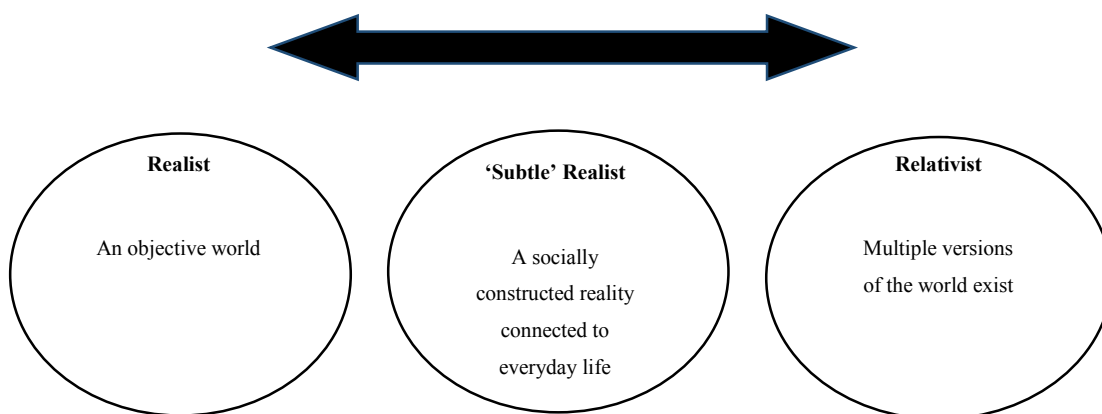


Figure 3-3: The Ontological Continuum: A ‘Subtle’ Realist Position

3.8 Methodology

In considering how I would enact these theoretical aspirations, I was guided by the methodological advice of Charmaz (2014). She explains that constructionist grounded theory provides “methodological momentum for realizing the potential of [social constructionism and] symbolic interactionism in empirical inquiry”

(Charmaz, 2014, p. 278). The methodological design that underpins this study will be set out before introducing the specific methods used to gather data. This section provides a rationale for the ways in which I used certain features of particular scholars' interpretations of grounded theory methodology. Grounded theory has been advanced in different ways, across various academic disciplines, at various times, and by many scholars (Punch, 1998; Charmaz, 2014); it needs "special treatment" to make clear how I intend to use it in this study (Punch, 1998).

Various interpretations of grounded theory have emerged over the years (see for example the variations of Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990, 1998; and Charmaz, 2014). In general, these interpretations can be split into objectivist and subjectivist 'camps' (Charmaz, 2000). Charmaz (2000) reveals that researchers often ask "...who's got the real grounded theory?", but she maintains it is a matter of deciding which "grounded theory essentials" should be included to suit the demands of the research study (p. 513). I have been largely, but not exclusively, inspired by the constructionist grounded theory of Charmaz (2006, 2014) as this corresponds with the theoretical position I explained in the previous section. Key to this 'grounded' approach was understanding that the research process is non-linear and an inherently 'messy' process (Charmaz, 2014). This 'messiness' relates to the premise that, as part of the methodological stance for research design, grounded theorists *start* their research by collecting data. I used this grounded theory perspective to observe teachers' practice from the outset of this study. Following this grounded approach (Charmaz, 2014) was the reason the pilot study was undertaken in Scottish secondary schools. Six teachers were observed working in three separate secondary schools and I managed to generate several 'sensitizing concepts' that were useful to focus my attention in future observations.

Following the pilot study, I started by immediately collecting data in the participants' classes and used these four sensitizing concepts to guide data gathering and analysis. My use of these sensitizing concepts is similar to that of Dey (1993): they were used like a "torch" in the dark to help find what I was

looking for in teachers' classes. I will return to the initial emphasis of these sensitizing concepts on 'types' of teachers later in this chapter. As the research progressed, I realised that the teachers in this study could not be categorized as a particular 'type' and these sensitizing concepts had to be reoriented into broader 'types of teaching', rather than representations of 'types of teachers'. Instead of seeing this reorientation as a negative aspect of the research, it is testament to the sensitive and flexible nature of these concepts to reflect accurately the practices I was observing in the research settings.

Furthermore, as part of grounded theory, while data collection was underway, data were simultaneously analysed to identify further areas to investigate. In other words, there was a continual "zig-zagging" (Charmaz, 2005) between data collection and data analysis. By 'zig-zagging' between data collection and data analysis, I was compelled to explore, adapt, reconsider, or even completely abandon information and ideas in my emerging analysis. Hence, this constant comparative form of research enabled me to construct an understanding of teachers' practice that was grounded in their actions and reflected what was important to them. However, whilst I found Charmaz's work (2014) influential in accessing participant's actions, her guidance for grounded theory studies on documenting and analysing contextual issues is less clear (Clarke, 2005; Corbin and Strauss, 2008). At the same time, though, I wanted to avoid imposing the type of "conditional matrices" (Corbin and Strauss, 2008) and "situational analysis" (Clarke, 2005) frameworks set out in some grounded theory literature. These frameworks would have placed an overemphasis on the context, rather than a balance between teachers' actions *and* their context.

The bulk of my methodology was forged from Charmaz's (2014, 2006) work. I was, albeit it to a lesser extent, also guided by the work of scholars advancing ethnography as a methodological position. Ethnography informed my understanding of the way in which contextual issues influenced teachers' work. This understanding was central to documenting the contextual issues in a more balanced way. My study is *not* ethnography. There are, however, links between

ethnographic methodology (and its methods) and my research questions. For instance, Tedlock (2000) proposes that ethnography is "...an on-going attempt to place specific encounters, events and understandings into a fuller, more meaningful context" (p. 455). Taking account of the contextual influences on teachers' work was an area of interest in this study. Not only was it important to capture the contrasting school contexts in which teachers were working, but it was also a key to bridging the gap in the literature between accounts of teachers' actions and the influences that inform these practices. The work of Hammersley and Atkinson (1995, 2007) equipped me to work with the tenets of ethnography as a methodology stance.

Hammersley and Atkinson (1995, 2007) present a conception of ethnography that involves participation in people's lives for an extended period. During this time, the researcher watches behaviour, questions practices, and records the information he or she sees and hears. This corresponded with the aspirations of my theoretical perspective and provided a means for understanding teachers' practice in their specific contexts. While I did not actively pursue an orthodox ethnographic stance for my methodology, this advice guided my observations of each teacher and I was able to record features of practice in relation to his or her specific context. Using pedagogy as a heuristic device in these situations was crucial. I observed teachers working first hand in their schools and I noted the references to, and links with, contextual features and issues. The specific details of gathering data in this way are discussed in the next section. Suffice it to say here that this methodological stance was complementary to the qualitative research methods of observation and interviews. These methods were selected to capture both the teachers' actions together with the purposes and contextual influences shaping these practices to address the research questions.

3.9 Methods

3.9.1 *Observations: the starting point and a sustained feature*

This study used observations as the primary research method. My purpose here was to generate a fine-grained picture of teachers' practice. I wanted to build a framework to understand what teachers were doing from a 'bottom-up' perspective. Observations helped me to achieve this objective. Before moving on to explain in detail how I employed observations, I wish to first emphasize that this method was the start of data collection and it continued for a sustained period of time. Using observations in this fashion – as a starting point and for a sustained period – generated the bulk of the data to construct the theoretical framework presented in this study.

There were several reasons for using observation as a starting point:

- I was interested in fostering a rapport with the participant teachers and the pupils so they felt comfortable working in a way that reflected everyday practice;
- I was able to build an understanding of each teacher's actions in the classroom from the outset of the research;
- Starting with observation ensured that I avoided teachers' practice being informed and influenced by any interview discussions relating to the interests of the research study. This concern was the fundamental reason for delaying the interviews with teachers until all the observations were complete;
- I used the observational phase of the research to contextualise and inform the interviews with teachers about their practice. In talking about their practice during interviews, there was a rich and shared experience between the teachers and myself.

There were two main reasons for using observation over a sustained period:

1. To capture the complexities of teachers' day-to-day actions and reflect a realistic picture of classroom life;
2. To help to achieve a "habituated" effect (Esterberg, 2002) so that the participants (teachers and pupils) eventually became accustomed to the presence of another person in classes.

Despite efforts to avoid influencing day-to-day practice, there were many occasions where my presence in class attracted interest from the teachers and pupils. This was an interesting dynamic: I wanted to avoid influencing the teachers' practice, yet I was ethically bound to inform participants of the research process. Participants had a right to know what I was doing, how long it would take, and what I hoped to find out. I found Esterberg's (2002) advice of having a pre-planned "cover story" a useful way to handle these situations. I generally framed my responses to suggest my research was interested in "learning about good teaching from a good teacher". Most people from early secondary pupils to head teachers were content with this explanation.

3.9.2 Observations as a research method

3.9.2.1 The observer's role: Participant? Non-Participant? Both?

There are two main approaches to conducting research observations: 'non-participant' observation and 'participant' observation (Punch, 1998). In non-participant observation "...the behaviour is observed as the stream of actions and events...naturally unfold" (p. 185). Whereas, for participant observations, the "...role of the researcher changes from detached observer...to both participant in and observer of the situation" (p. 188). However, I would argue that Punch's explanation of the observer's role as 'participant' or 'non-participant' is problematic. My experiences of conducting observations during the pilot study were more reflective of Wind's (2008) views. She presents the need for a "negotiated" observer's role based on the contextual demands of each research setting. In other words, researchers should avoid setting out to achieve a specific

form of observation in advance and instead they should negotiate the appropriate form on a setting-to-setting basis.

In a similar way to Wind (2008), my role in this study was both a participant and non-participant observer as it not only varied from setting-to-setting, but there were also times when it varied within a specific setting. Thus, my observer role was more fluid than suggested by Punch (1998) and relied more on the negotiation highlighted by Wind (2008) and sometimes intuition about which observer role to perform. There were times when I was able to stand back and observe events as they unfolded. These situations afforded the opportunity to make extensive fieldnotes of the events that took place in the class and, where appropriate, to make a decision to interact with the teacher or pupils. Further, there were occasions where a teacher asked me to supervise a small group in class. These situations presented an opportunity for me to participate and act like a teacher in a class and write notes retrospectively.

3.9.2.2 Becoming an observer: any skills required?

In relation to *how* I used observation as a method in the field, this process involved much more than simply writing notes in a notebook. In fact, the standard research methods textbooks are generally scarce on detail when providing an overview of how to operationalize observations in the field (Emerson *et al.*, 1995; Gobo, 2005). Whether the scant overviews of observation in methods textbooks are the result of it being a highly specialized method that is difficult to operationalize or of it being easy to implement and self-evident is very much an open question (Emerson *et al.*, 1995; Gobo, 2005). Due to the lack of guidance in the methods textbooks, I have added much detail to this section. My aim is to make the ways in which I used this method clear to the reader, thereby allowing the quality of the research to be assessed. Moreover, in adding this detail, I draw upon the limited range of useful texts that are available and explain how these influenced my understanding and decisions about how to use observations.

DeWalt and DeWalt (2002) was a useful starting point. They explain that:

The beginning researcher, then, is urged to experience fieldwork at every opportunity and *practice* the specific skills that are important, such as active looking, improving memory, informal interviewing, writing detailed field notes, and, perhaps most importantly, *patience* (p. vii, emphasis added).

Initially, DeWalt and DeWalt's advice regarding the need to "practise" and the importance of "patience" were invaluable. It was for this reason that I conducted a pilot study in the early stages of my research to practice and refine the "specific skills" required. Therefore, when I started the observations in the study reported here, I was better prepared to produce the level of detail required to capture the intricacies of teachers' practice. I would argue that this preliminary phase of my development as a researcher enhanced the overall quality of the research. For instance, Toren's (1996) words buttress the claim that my pilot work enhanced the overall quality of the current study:

...you become better and better at participating, better and better at observing, and better and better at writing down your observations (p. 103).

I also attended to DeWalt and DeWalt's appeal for a researcher to show "patience", although this virtue was beyond me in the opening stages of the research. In the first few weeks of the study, I was spending time with teachers in three different schools. There were occasions where I was too keen to progress and I tried to include two or even three observations with separate classes in a day. This was exhausting. I underestimated the mental demands of conducting research in this way and overlooked the time consuming nature of processing data of this kind. Within a few weeks, the need for patience became apparent: I staggered my visits across the sample of teachers and scheduled subsequent observations with individual teachers two-to-three weeks apart. I would argue that early recognition of the need for patience also enhanced the overall quality of the research. It enabled me to remain fresh and alert when documenting observations and provided adequate time to process and make sense of the data.

3.9.2.3 *Being clear on what to observe!*

In terms of *what* I attended to when I was in teachers' classes, I was quite clear about my focus. However, I understand that for some researchers what to focus their attention on will be extremely daunting. Take, as an example, the following excerpt from DeWalt and DeWalt (2002):

The most important skill...is the ability to attend to detail...This can include noting the arrangement of *physical space*, the *arrangement of people* within that space, the *specific activities and movement of people* in a scene, the *interaction* among people in the scene (and with the researcher), the *specific words spoken*, and the non-verbal interaction, including *facial expressions* (p. 69, emphasis added).

In *any* research project and for *any* researcher, documenting the detail across the array of options offered above will be challenging. However, note the way in which Dewalt and DeWalt specifically mention that the list of options above are the things that a researcher “can include”. In other words, they are not presenting a list that *should* be included by the researcher. In relation to questions about what to observe, DeWalt and DeWalt claim that the popular answer is “everything”. However, they are quick to point out that “not only is this [attending to everything] not feasible, it is probably completely impossible” (p. 76). Two main sources informed my focus for what I should observe.

Firstly, I used Alexander's (2008b) definition of pedagogy as a heuristic device to guide the overall focus of the study. The ‘classic’ accounts of grounded theory methodology would eschew the use of these ideas to avoid “forcing” the data into a researcher's pre-conceived ideas (see Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The contemporaneous rise of the subjectivist ‘camp’ of grounded theorists support the use of foundational concepts to guide data collection and analysis (see Charmaz, 2014; Clarke, 2006; Dey, 1993, 1999). Thus, Alexander's definition of pedagogy was used to present teachers' actions in the classroom and the associated purposes and contextual influences as a ‘package’.

Secondly, the sensitizing concepts about ‘types of teachers’ developed during my pilot study – teacher-directed, teacher-guided, teacher-pupil negotiated, and pupil-initiated – were carried forward into the current study as a tentative guide to capture what I was seeing and hearing during the research. I remained alert to the possible limitations of these guiding concepts and a later section will describe how they came to be reframing to a degree. My observations focused on the teacher as he or she worked with pupils across S1-S3 and across different physical activities. I was interested in the way in which participant teachers worked with their classes as a collective group and/or with smaller sub-groups of children.

More specifically, my observations documented *what was said* and *what was done* and *by whom* during the participant teachers’ classes. In relation to ‘what was said’ in class I recorded as much of the teachers’ talk and pupils’ talk verbatim as possible, to give a sense of “being there” and to preserve the “meaning” of class activities and actions (Emerson, *et al.*, 1995). I captured ‘what was done’ in class by recording the sequences of teachers’ actions and their movements in the physical space as they interacted with the pupils. In recording ‘what was said’ and ‘what was done’ in the class, I amassed a detailed account of the various recurring patterns that were taking place in teachers’ classrooms. I maintained an on-going interest in the purposes and contextual demands shaping these teachers’ practices via Alexander’s definition of pedagogy. This interest was always in the background: my ears tended to ‘prick up’ when a teacher mentioned, or if I became specifically aware, of any purposes and contextual issues influencing the actions performed in the classroom. Adopting a focused approach to my observations using a heuristic device, and a number of sensitizing concepts, had both pragmatic and theoretical significance in this study. In a pragmatic sense, it guided data collection and made efficient use of time so I could ensure data collection was complete in the allocated timescale. Theoretically, these concepts guided my attention away from everything and anything and towards a set of refined concepts grounded in the data.

A final, related way in which the sensitizing concepts were profitable during data collection was during my efforts to track the regularity with which these practices featured in lessons. I was aware of the limitations that Silverman (2006b) cites with the form of research presented in the current study:

...qualitative research, through which attempts are made to describe social processes, share a single defect. The critical reader is forced to ponder whether the researcher has selected only those fragments of data which support his argument...simple counting techniques can offer a means to survey the whole corpus of data ordinarily lost in intensive, qualitative research. Instead of taking the researcher's word for it, the reader has a chance to gain a sense of the flavour of the data as a whole (pp. 51-52).

My study is not a quantitative investigation, but I could see the benefits of these “simple counting techniques” for qualitative research to give readers a “flavour of the data as a whole”. In the early stages of data collection, I attempted to keep a simple tally of the regularity with which the participant teachers performed these sensitizing concepts. However, I became aware of a fundamental flaw as the research progressed: there were sweeping variations in the length of time that teachers spent performing within and between each of these forms of practice. For example, there were moments where teacher guided-practice lasted only a few minutes and other moments where it lasted for an entire lesson. Similarly, there were moments where teacher-led practice lasted a few minutes and other moments where pupil-led practice lasted a whole lesson.

Given the arbitrary way in which the teachers performed these sensitizing concepts during my observations I avoided the temptation to represent these insights by tabulating the regularity with which they occurred in practice. Contrary to the advice of Silverman (2006b), I believe presenting data from “simple counting techniques” in this case would mislead the readers of this thesis. Instead, I made notes about the duration of these concepts when I recognised teachers' actions were corresponding with one of these forms of practice. A useful guiding statement from these notes in regards to the “whole corpus of data” is that the

regularity of these practices was such that they all featured at some point across two or three successive observations with different teachers.

3.9.2.4 *The production of observation data*

My observations were conducted over a year-long period in the field, between January 2013 and December 2013. Table 3-2 details the total number of observations completed with each teacher and the period he or she was involved in the study.

Table 3-2: Observations of Teachers' Practice

Teacher	School	Total Observations with S1 – S3 classes	Time Period
Gaynor	Mayfly High School	21*	January 2013 – June 2013
Roddy	Hare's Ear High School	18*	January 2013 – June 2013
Stanley	Bibio High School	13*	February 2013 – June 2013
Seymour	Greenwell's High School	10 ⁺	March 2013 – December 2013
Erika	Blue Dun High School	15*	March 2013 – November 2013
Jessie	Invicta High School	11*	April 2013 - November 2013
6 Teachers	6 Schools	88 lessons	12 Months

* Single period lessons lasting between 50 minutes and 60 minutes

⁺ 7 out of 10 observations were double period lessons lasting 110 minutes

In general, I aimed to spend one period of the school day with a teacher once every two-to-three weeks, but the teachers' availability and work commitments usually dictated this arrangement. Remaining in the field for an extended period was important to avoid forcing teachers' practice into an underdeveloped theoretical framework based on a limited number of observations.

Initially, I intended all six teachers to begin the observations at the same time. Due to the work constraints and personal circumstances of the teachers, they ended up starting in two distinct phases: three of them – Gaynor, Roddy, Stanley – started in early 2013 and finished in mid-to-late 2013; the other three – Seymour, Erika, Jessie – started in early-to-mid 2013 and finished in late 2013.

In hindsight, staggering the data collection into distinct phases was helpful in two main ways. Firstly, it ensured I could initially focus my observations on a smaller number of teachers without being overwhelmed: with visiting too many teachers; with data collection; or with data analysis. Secondly, once some of my ideas started to coalesce from observations in the first phase of the research, I was able to use these to inform my data collection and process larger chunks of data during my analysis of teachers' practice in the second phase of the research. The number of times I observed each teacher varied; that is, my observations were not standardised in a way that all teachers were observed an equal number of times. Following Charmaz (2014), I knew when I had captured enough of a teacher's practice when I was seeing "nothing new" across a succession of observations.

The arrangements concerning when classes would be observed were negotiated on a visit-to-visit basis with the teachers. There was a need for negotiation so I could observe a range of classes, but on a date and time that would suit the teachers' timetable and work commitments. To construct a theoretical framework that reflected the day-to-day demands of the physical education world, observation work was arranged to include a wide range of classes and physical activities. Tables 3-3 and 3-4 show the range of physical activities and classes that were observed during my time in the field.

Table 3-3: Range of Physical Activities

Teacher	Activities								Total
	Rugby/ Soccer/ Basketball/ Hockey	Tennis/ Badminton/ Table Tennis/ Volleyball	Dodgeball	Athletics	Rounders Softball/ Cricket	Swimming	Fitness/ Health	Dance/ Gymnastics	
Gaynor	3	1	1	5	4	3	1	3	21
Roddy	2	2	0	8	3	0	3	0	18
Stanley	1	0	0	5	1	0	1	5	13
Seymour	0	2	0	5	0	0	3	0	10
Erika	5	1	0	5	0	0	2	2	15
Jessie	3	0	0	2	3	2	0	1	11
Total	14	6	1	30	11	5	10	11	88

These observations were recorded as fieldnotes. However, the timing of when fieldnotes were recorded needed careful consideration. Drawing on the work of Emerson *et al.* (1995), I was mindful of the need for caution:

...decisions about when...to take jottings must be considered in the context of the broader set of relations with those in the setting...When deciding when and where to jot, it is rarely helpful or possible to specify in advance one 'best way'...a good rule of thumb is to *remain open and flexible*... (pp. 25-26, emphasis added).

Guided by Emerson *et al.*'s advice, I spent time in advance of the study considering how and when it would be most appropriate to write field notes. I was continually flexible. For example, one of my first observations was with a teacher as she worked with an S2 all-girl swimming class. It was the first time observing

this all-girl class and despite receiving information about the observations, one pupil asked: “who’s the weird guy”? I could understand that a strange adult male, watching and scribbling notes in a book at the side of the pool as a class of adolescent girls were swimming, would appear to be “weird”. I quietly mentioned to the teacher that I would refrain from writing notes during this class and she confirmed that this would be “a good idea”. Instead, I watched and listened carefully and wrote up notes retrospectively.

Table 3-4: Range of Classes from S1-3

Teacher	S1 Classes	S2 Classes	S3 Classes	Total
Gaynor	4	10	7	21
Roddy	9	9	0	18
Stanley	1	4	8	13
Seymour	7	3	0	10
Erika	7	4	4	15
Jessie	3	4	4	11
Total	31	34	23	88

In general, though, I tended to write in my larger (A5 sized) notebook in an overt manner during the course of a lesson. Emerson *et al.* (1996) refer to these as “open jottings” as the fieldnotes that are documented “overtly” and in front of participants. On the one hand, these “open jottings” can work to make the participants feel accustomed to the work of the research and that the research is

being completed in an open and public way. On the other hand, open jottings can “strain relations” and “distract” both the researcher and participants from the events that are taking place (Emerson *et al.*, 1995). During observations in the classroom, I used a pencil and made my notes as quickly and concisely as possible to provide a description of teachers’ work (Emerson, *et al.*, 1995; Silverman, 2006a).

A major challenge was the ‘when-to-watch’ and ‘when-to-write’ dilemma. By watching, I was able to attend closely to the unfolding scenes, but with my head up, I was unable to make any notes. By writing notes, I was able to record an unfolding scene, but with my head down, I may have missed vital pieces of information about the scene (or next scene) taking place in front of me. I got better at knowing when to watch or continue watching and when to write, or forego the need to write, as the research progressed. In part, I addressed these major challenges by striving to make fieldnotes that followed “the storyline” (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2002) of a lesson and reflected both “the mundane and the dramatic” events taking place in schools (Emerson *et al.*, 1996, p. xv). My fieldnotes were usually a descriptive overview of what takes place before, during and after a given lesson: I sketched out diagrams of PE departments and the workspaces where lessons were taking place; I recorded the teachers’ talk verbatim as much as possible; I described the movements, interactions, and activities of the teacher and pupils.

Over and above observations during classes, there was still much about teachers and their school contexts that I needed to capture. In other words, my fieldnotes were not just a record of what took place between the teacher and the pupils during a class. I was able to follow up on leads, probe the purposes of their actions, confirm emerging ideas, and clarify teachers’ meanings by informally interviewing the participant teachers. I refer to these moments as ‘informal interviews’, but they are a key part of observation work (Emerson *et al.*, 1996; Luker, 2008; Toren, 1996). There were several transition points outwith classes where I had the opportunity to interview the participant teachers informally.

In contrast to the overt fieldnotes I took during classes, I wanted to avoid publicly documenting these exchanges. I wanted teachers to feel at ease during these moments and talk freely about their practice and school context. If I had hurriedly paged through my larger notebook and started to record teachers' comments verbatim during these transition points, it would have interrupted the flow of our conversation. I simply asked questions and *listened* to the teachers' responses. This was the part of the observations where DeWalt and DeWalt's (2002) advice for "improving memory" played a significant role. Developing the ability of my working memory during my pilot study, I was more capable of remembering key exchanges and recording these retrospectively in the current study. I would privately record these in a smaller (credit card sized) 'jot' notebook that I kept in my pocket as soon as there was a convenient moment.

Thereafter, I typed out "expanded field notes" to provide a comprehensive overview of the observations that were made (Silverman, 2006a). In constructing a narrative in my expanded fieldnotes I used a combination of my overt and private fieldnotes. Where possible, I always typed these extended notes on the same day that I had visited a school. In this way, I was able to recall many of the scenes and I used my memory to augment the expanded fieldnotes. In writing up these expanded notes, I punctuated the narrative with the verbatim comments and associated gestures of the teachers and the pupils. Using quotation marks, I was able to indicate the verbatim comments of teachers and pupils. For moments where I was unable to record or recall the exact comments, I refrained from using quotation marks and typed a summative overview of key points and exchanges. Using quotation marks intelligently alongside different gestures helped to preserve meaning: it avoided blurring what teachers and pupils actually said with my interpretations of what they said.

3.9.3 Formal interviews: an equally valuable source of data

Formal interviews took place once all observation work was complete and were used to explore further the theoretical framework. I refer to these as 'formal'

interviews to distinguish them from the ‘informal’ interviews that I completed as part of my observation work. Given that these formal interviews were conducted once all the observations of a teacher’s practice were complete, this was the last official point of contact that I had with the participants. My purpose was to use the observation data to inform and contextualise my interview discussions with the participant teachers. The merits of this “grounded” (Charmaz, 2002) approach to interviewing will be discussed shortly. For the time being, I wish to discuss briefly my views on the relationship between observation data and interview data.

In earlier sections, observations were presented as the primary source of data collection in this study. I used observation and referred to it as a primary form of data collection *only* in the sense that the research started with this method and it formed the bulk of my data set. This distinction does not relegate the method of interviewing, and the data it generates, into a position where it was somehow less valuable in comparison. Indeed, there is a historical tension in the research literature between the data generated by interviews and the data generated by observations (Atkinson and Coffey, 2002; Atkinson *et al.*, 2003; Delamont, 2012a, b; Robson, 2011; Silverman, 2010). It is for this reason that I address specifically the relationship between interviews and observations at the outset of this section. This tension will be acknowledged before moving on to present a view of interview data and observation data as *equally valuable*.

Much of the tension relates to the way in which observations are espoused as a superior research method because events that are observed first hand are somehow more authentic or ‘real’ in comparison with any other research method. See, for example, the classic articles of Howard Becker (Becker, 1958; Becker and Geer, 1957, 1958) in favour of participant observation. Another lesser part of the tension is the widespread perception and use of interviews in an overly narrow way; that is, the overuse of interviews to generate accounts of events that have happened in the past (Delamont, 2012a, b). There are alleged problems with the factual accuracy of participants’ recollections when viewing or using interviews in this narrow way (Atkinson and Coffey, 2002; Mason, 2002). This tension has resulted

in many “unnecessary and unhelpful” debates between scholars in an effort to advance observation *or* interviews as the superior research method (Atkinson and Coffey, 2002, p. 809). While these debates have resulted in researchers tending to favour one of these methods – observation or interviews – Atkinson and Coffey (2002) recommend viewing these from a “symmetrical perspective”. Adopting a “symmetrical” stance in this study more accurately reflects the perspective on research I defended earlier where researchers work in flexible ways with any tools available to address a research problem.

Interviews were used in this study in a way that transcends a narrow interest in the recollection of events from the past (Atkinson *et al.*, 2003). In other words, I did *not* use the interviews as an opportunity to ask teachers to recall and then comment on *specific events* that took place several months previously when I was observing their class. An interest in recalling these details would have involved formally interviewing teachers about specific events after every lesson to enhance the quality of their recollections. Contrastingly, the interviews explored broader ideas about their teaching garnered from the observations of their practice, as captured by the theoretical framework. In discussing the key features of practice with participants, I viewed this narrated form of data as equally valuable in comparison to my observation data. Therefore, the responses of the participant teachers helped to refine the theoretical framework and provided a means of capturing the personal and shared meanings in their socially constructed (teaching)worlds.

3.9.4 *Interviews as a research method*

3.9.4.1 *Inspiration from grounded theory interviewing*

Warren (2002) claims that:

Qualitative interviewing is based on conversation...the emphasis [is] on researchers asking questions and listening, and respondents answering... (p. 83).

At a basic level, Warren's comments encapsulate the essence of qualitative interviewing. The process involves "asking" and "listening" by the interviewer and "answering" by the participants. Yet, I approached the interview process as much more complex in nature and more interactive in design than Warren's comments suggest. I align with Mason (2002) who views "asking" and "listening" as the basic elements, but adds the crucial dimension of "interpreting" into the interview process. The research questions and my theoretical perspective influenced the interview process. Consideration was given to the way knowledge was not "out there" in the world or "in there" in the minds of human beings (Mason, 2002, p. 226). Rather, I viewed 'knowledge' as constructed in nature and subsequently treated the interviews as a site where the participants and I could arrive at a constructed understanding of their practice. The theoretical framework, and my desire to pursue key features of practice derived from observational work, contextualised the interview phase of the research. This information influenced the questions asked, when to listen, what to listen for, and the responses that needed to be probed for further details.

Following up on key features from observations in the interviews maintained the "grounded" emphasis of the study (Charmaz, 2002). There were several reasons for using interviews at the end point of this study:

- the interviews and the various topics discussed could reflect the participants' experiences;
- to investigate the extent to which the theoretical framework was a fair representation of teachers' practice;
- to explore unseen events, unspoken influences, and possible misinterpretations of the teachers' practice during interviews.

Charmaz (2002) notes a main thrust of interviewing participants as part of a grounded theory study:

Grounded theory interviewing differs from in-depth interviewing as the research process proceeds in that grounded theorists narrow the range of interview topics to gather specific data for their theoretical frameworks (p. 676).

In this quotation, Charmaz highlights the way in which a grounded theorist works progressively to gather data specifically to address his or her theoretical interests. Consequently, across a series of interviews the researcher will shift from open-ended, in-depth exchanges to have a more “narrow” range of questions and topic to discuss with participants. The way in which I used observations and informal interviews to “narrow the range of interview topics” is consonant with Charmaz’s (2002) guidelines. I pursued this narrow range of topics using one interview with each participant teacher lasting approximately one hour, addressing the topics of: general experiences of the observations; the variation of teachers’ practice; the flexible nature of teachers’ practice; and getting the class to work ‘well’.

Charmaz (2002), however, also makes a pointed critique regarding the use of “one shot” interviews. Researchers should construct understanding over a series of interviews and by “zig-zagging” between data collection and analysis (Charmaz, 2006); the aim is to simultaneously develop an understanding and foster relationships with participants (Charmaz, 2002). In relation to the latter, I accept that a researcher pursuing a narrow range of topics in a “one shot” interview would be a disconcerting experience for a participant. Indeed, Esterberg (2002) argues that relationships with participants are central to the success of any type of qualitative interview. Whilst I essentially used a “one shot” interview, I would argue that this was quite different to the limitations set out by Charmaz (2002). My decision to use one formal interview was that there has to be closure at some point in a research study: I was reasonably confident in the insights gained from observations and I was mindful of the on-going demands on the research participants. I was aware of the time and emotional commitment that the participants had invested in this study. They had already been involved over a period of several months and to further request a series of interviews would have over imposed on their professional lives.

3.9.4.2 *Inspiration from semi-structured interviewing*

Alongside grounded theory, I considered other ‘types’ of interviews to structure my interactions with the participants. It was necessary to both consider the structure of the interviews in relation to my theoretical concerns *and* to recognise the teachers as active *participants* in this study. Charmaz (2014) specifically addresses the interviewer’s quest for “conceptual development”, rather than exploring participants’ in-depth, storied accounts of a phenomenon; she admits this can lead to “tricky ground” (p. 87). In using a “one shot” interview, I discovered that “tricky ground”: I wanted to avoid wholly confining the participants into the role of a ‘respondent’ whereby questions were asked to elicit specific responses, and yet, I was concerned with exploring topics related to the framework constructed during my observations.

There are several ‘types’ of interview available to the researcher (Cohen *et al.*, 2011; Denscombe, 2007; Esterberg, 2002; Punch, 2009), but, the type of interview needs to be considered in line with the demands of the research. Punch (2009) presents contrasting types of interview along a continuum based on the interactive potential between the interviewer and the interviewee. This continuum ranges from ‘structured’ at one extreme to ‘unstructured’ at the other. Structured interviews specifically aim to “strip” the facts out of a topic of interest and so these were not considered as a viable option (Holstein and Gubrium, 2011). Unstructured interviews involve documenting a “free flowing” stream of information from participants (Holstein and Gubrium, 2011); I initially considered this type of interview as an option. However, in using an unstructured format, the participants generally decide the topics for discussion and are encouraged to talk extensively throughout the interview (Punch, 2009; Robson, 2011). The input of the researcher into the discussions during an unstructured interview is minimal and this concerned me given there was only one opportunity to meet and formally interview the participants.

With this in mind, I decided to use semi-structured interviews. I argue that semi-structured interviews presented the flexibility I required to take account of specific theoretical issues, but at the same time provided scope for participants to respond to these openly and in a sufficient level of detail. Robson (2011) explains that for semi-structured interviews, the interviewer prepares an introductory overview and a flexible interview schedule. Significantly, the interview schedule is used only as *a guide* for the researcher and includes a range of potential questions and a set of associated probes for each question (see Appendix E for a sample of one interview schedule used in this study). There were several reasons for incorporating a semi-structured approach into the interviews in this study:

- the questions reflected the range of topics I had identified and acted as a reminder for myself;
- I used the potential for probing to check participants' meanings and explore their ideas further;
- the flexible nature of the questions and probes meant our interactions during the interviews were almost conversational in nature as I could sensitively respond to each participant teacher's comments, enabling opportunity for them to speak freely and openly.

A semi-structured form of interviewing was consonant with the grounded theory foundation of this study; it provided latitude to remain simultaneously open and flexible to the participants' views (Punch, 2009; Robson, 2011) while pursuing some specific topics of theoretical interest (Charmaz, 2002).

3.9.4.3 The production of interview data

There were significant decisions made prior to the interviews taking place. In terms of the arrangements for the interviews – the date, time, and venue – the participant teachers were asked to make these decisions. I recognised the need for the teachers to feel secure in their surroundings. Five of the participant teachers – Gaynor, Stanley, Roddy, Erika, Jessie – decided to be interviewed in a quiet room

in their school during a free period or immediately after the school day. Only one teacher, Seymour, decided on a different interview arrangement and he chose to be interviewed at his home in the evening due to work and family commitments.

As it is not possible to recall accurately all information during the interview, I agreed in advance with the participants that our discussions would be recorded using an audio recording device. I conducted six grounded, semi-structured interviews over a period of four months, between November 2013 and February 2014. Table 3-5 provides an overview of the dates when these were conducted and the duration of each interview.

Table 3-5: Interviews with Teachers about their Practice

Teacher	Number of Interviews	Date of Interview	Duration of Interview
Gaynor	1	13 November 2013	69mins
Roddy	1	26 November 2013	45mins
Stanley	1	28 November 2013	45mins
Erika	1	09 December 2013	52mins
Jessie	1	18 December 2013	87mins
Seymour	1	03 February 2014	69mins
6 Teachers	6 Interviews	4 Months	367 Minutes

The main reason it took four months to complete one interview with each teacher was that the observations finished at different times and it was challenging to find time in some teachers' work schedules to complete the interviews. The main reason there was variation in the duration of interviews was that our discussions were conversational in nature and they ended when these conversations came to a natural conclusion.

My only specification in terms of these arrangements was that the interviews took place after all observations were complete. I was acutely aware of the working conditions of each teacher and the time they had already invested in this study. I suggested in advance that the approximate time to complete the interview would be one hour; this provided a frame of reference for the teachers when they were thinking about scheduling the interview in relation to their busy work commitments.

A list of introductory points was used to start each interview. These points were *not* a fully scripted speech that I read out to each participant in the same way in an effort to improve reliability. Rather, I delivered these points in a conversational style to each individual in an effort to put them at ease and signpost the topics that *might* arise. The following three points are the main ways in which I aimed to put the participants at ease.

- I specifically let the participants know that they could express openly their thoughts and views (Punch, 2009; Robson, 2011);
- while participants were talking openly, my role was to listen actively (Holstein and Gubrium, 2011) and I work more effectively when I discretely jot down points as I am listening. Reminding teachers that I would occasionally make notes was important as this can distract participants (Gillham, 2000);
- for ethical reasons, I specifically wanted to seek participant teachers' permission to make retrospective notes where the recorder did not capture significant exchanges.

As explained in a preceding section, an interview schedule was used during each interview to ensure there was a balance between pursuing a range of topics and the participants openly expressing their views during the interview (Robson, 2011). During the interviews, I asked key questions and used a set of associated probes for each question (see Appendix E). Using this as a guide, I was able to ask various types of questions:

- I aimed to ask many open-ended questions to provide many opportunities for participants to talk at length. These questions allowed for unanticipated perspectives to emerge;
- I varied the form of questions that I asked between descriptive (who did that?), evaluative (how did you feel about that?) and non-specific (can you tell me a bit more about that?) (Charmaz, 2014);
- I purposely asked verification questions as the interviews unfolded to check the accuracy of my interpretations (Silverman, 2010). After tracking an extended piece of dialogue, I would recap the main points and ask “have I got that right?” or ask “are you saying that...” and then recap the main points. Not only was this a way of specifically checking the participants’ meanings during the interview, but it also led to the participants adding additional information and detail (Charmaz, 2014; Silverman, 2010).

Refining the questions in advance and asking them slowly during the interview was important for effective communication with the participants (Charmaz, 2014; Punch, 2009; Robson, 2011). This schedule also helped me to remain calm when the participants started to wander in their responses or if they started to talk about issues that I planned to discuss at a later point in the interview (Charmaz, 2014). Using my interview schedule as a “flexible tool” (Charmaz, 2014), I was able to modify the questions sensitively based on the exchanges taking place with a participant. By listening actively throughout, I encouraged the participants by uttering response tokens like “uh huh”, “I see”, and “sure” when they were talking at length; making eye contact and nodding occasionally as they were answering

(Charmaz, 2014). During the moments where I was unsure of the participants' meanings, I would use a verification question or simply ask them to "tell me a bit more about that". This approach facilitated a conversational feel to the discussions and encouraged extensive responses from the participants.

The audio data were transcribed verbatim to ensure a comprehensive account of the participants' statements (Silverman, 2006a). I made this decision as there are marked distinctions between "spoken and written" language (Halliday, 1989) and this has implications for qualitative research. Atkinson (1995) explains the tension between the 'readability' and 'fidelity' of an interview text: a researcher may choose to improve readability of the transcript by adding additional layers of punctuation, which may reinterpret meaning; or maintain the fidelity of the transcript by typing all the exchanges verbatim to preserve meaning, which impacts the readability. I recognised that verbatim transcriptions are time consuming to produce and more challenging to interpret for the researcher (Atkinson, 1995; Charmaz, 2006, 2014; Silverman, 2006a).

My analysis, however, was contingent upon accessing meaning and this involved looking at the language and special terms that teachers use when they talk about their practice. Additionally, verbatim transcriptions were useful to identify false starts, filler words, utterances, and the repetitive phrases of the teachers as they formulated answers to the interview questions. This emphasis demanded high fidelity of interview texts and verbatim transcriptions were a way to leave these meanings intact. I personally transcribed the first three interviews – with Gaynor, Roddy, and Stanley – to get a 'feel' for the data. However, due to the volume of data the interviews generated, the final three interviews – with Erika, Seymour, and Jessie – were outsourced to a professional transcription company. Once all interviews were transcribed, I checked the final versions of these by listening and re-listening to the audio recordings. This process improved the accuracy of the data by correcting any discrepancies between the audio recording and the transcripts. In reviewing all interview transcripts, the conversations between the

participants and myself flowed and there were no long silences or confrontational moments.

3.10 Reflexivity

Locating this research study within the broad parameters of an interpretivist framework and employing observations and interviews required that I reflect upon my role as the researcher. Research following an ‘inductive’ approach, where key issues can emerge without the researcher foreseeing what these might be, demands reflexivity from the researcher. The data generated from the observations and interviews in this study produced a plethora of information. I was the central “tool” for data gathering and data analysis (Charmaz, 2014) and I will have constructed and interpreted this data in particular ways. Thus, there is a need for me to be reflexive throughout the research process to remain wary of the ways in which I may have ‘shaped’ data collection and analysis.

My personal and professional backgrounds will have influenced all aspects of the research, affecting the ways in which I constructed key issues and ideas during the research process (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Langdridge, 2007). Accordingly, it is necessary to make clear the “conscious and unconscious baggage” (Scheurich, 1997, p. 73) that was carried into this study. This awareness allows the reader to be more aware of how my own personal and professional backgrounds will have influenced the research in different ways. This provides information for judging the following: why I saw and heard some things as significant; why some things may have been dismissed as insignificant and are therefore absent; the way I have acted and interacted with others; and how others may have perceived me during the research process.

My personal background has implications for the research process. A nexus of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and socio-economic status can result in the researcher reading specific texts and presenting findings in particular ways during the writing-up process (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Langdridge, 2007). I am a ‘white’,

Scottish, middle-class, able-bodied, 38-year-old male. I shared with the participant teachers in this study the characteristics of being 'white', Scottish, middle-class and able-bodied. Additionally, for all observations and interviews in this study, I purposely dressed in 'PE style' clothes: polo shirt, tracksuit bottoms, and training shoes. This furthered the ways in which I was similar to the teachers taking part in this study. I supposed that the teachers may have felt more at ease and the pupils may have initially thought I was another teacher and made them feel more content with my presence in the classroom. These similarities, however, may have had their limitations. Conducting research with participants and in settings that are familiar to the researcher can obscure his or her ability to make these encounters appear "strange" (Atkinson *et al.*, 2003; Delamont, 2012a, b). The fact that I was similar to these teachers in terms of being 'white', Scottish, middle-class and able-bodied may have constrained me in having similar perspectives about the physical education world. Likewise, the fact that I 'looked like' these teachers in the way I dressed, may have confined the pupils to interact with me in particular ways.

My professional background has ramifications for the research process. I am a qualified teacher of physical education and used to work in schools before moving on to become a teaching fellow at the University of Edinburgh. The researcher is the main tool in the worlds they investigate (Charmaz, 2014; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007) and his or her 'insider-outsider' orientation should be acknowledged. Rather than viewing myself as an 'insider' *or* an 'outsider', I take up the stance of Hellowell (2006) to more accurately reflect my position. Hellowell presents the researcher's insider-outsider position on a continuum to transcend dualistic views of 'insider' or 'outsider'. My two professional roles simultaneously positioned me in the middle of the continuum as both an 'insider' and 'outsider' in this style of research (Hellowell, 2006).

My physical education teacher background was an important common feature between the participants and myself. I had an 'insider's' understanding of the Scottish physical education landscape. I taught in schools for six years from 2003-2009 and thus have performed the role of a teacher, implementing previous policy

guidelines like most of the participant teachers. My experience also meant I could often empathise with the day-to-day demands of the job, share some of the special terms, and understand the language of policy in the education and physical education worlds. This commonality was also important for gaining access to schools and quickly building a rapport with the participants. My role as a teacher enabled me to recruit former colleagues or access other teachers I was interested in recruiting.

The sample ranged from former teaching colleagues to teachers whom I was unfamiliar with at the start of the research. There are concurrent advantages and disadvantages of being familiar or unfamiliar to participants. On the one hand, during observations and interviews, participant teachers may have been uneasy with a former colleague or a relatively unknown physical education professional viewing their practice over an extended period. Teachers may have felt anxious if they believed I was there to judge or assess them; this anxiety may have been more pronounced in the early stages of the research. On the other hand, participant teachers may have been more comfortable with a former colleague or a relatively unknown physical education professional viewing their practice over an extended period. Nevertheless, my presence in teachers' classes may have worked to constrain or enhance these teachers' day-to-day practice and I was aware of this throughout the research.

My professional background has also involved a move away from teaching in schools to working in teacher education at the University of Edinburgh. This positioned me as an 'outsider' in relation to the Scottish physical education *teaching* community. Some participants perceived this professional role as an 'outsider' position. For instance, I recorded in my fieldnotes that one teacher, when he was introducing me to a class for the first time, commented that I used to be a teacher, "but now he has moved onto *better* things". There were similar comments from other participants (and their department colleagues) relating to the fact I was completing PhD level research. Taken together – a position as a teaching fellow at the University and my PhD research – may have been perceived

by participants as more superior to the role of teaching in schools and positioned me as a person with expert knowledge. While I do *not* assume to hold a superior position or have expert knowledge, we cannot overlook the way in which some research participants may have perceived this position. Similar to the implications I raised earlier for my observation work, these perceptions could have worked to constrain or enhance the comments participant teachers made about their practice during the interviews.

Furthermore, I am professionally (and personally) interested in teachers' pedagogy; this has remained an interest since my undergraduate studies. Indeed, this study set out to explore the variety displayed in teachers' day-to-day practice. It is fully acknowledged that I endorse teachers using a wide range of ways to work with the pupils in their classes. I eschew the indiscriminate critique levelled at direct teaching approaches and question the wholesale adoption of pupil-led approaches. Instead, I see the relevance of all these approaches as part of a teacher's pedagogical repertoire so they can meet the diverse challenges of day-to-day life in the classroom. Given this personal stake and the potential contribution to knowledge created by the research, it has to be acknowledged that I have personal and professional investment in the findings generated from this study. Following Denscombe (2007), I aimed to adopt an open and neutral stance to allow an understanding to emerge that reflected the work of the participant teachers. In other words, I was mindful to refrain from making suggestions of the things to see in class or making leading comments to encourage particular ways of working to appear more often. Nonetheless, an interest in pedagogy will undoubtedly have influenced me in an unconscious way in relation to the things I saw and heard as significant and insignificant.

Discussing my role as an interpretivist researcher uncovers several shortcomings of this form of inquiry (Macdonald *et al.*, 2002). Using observations and interviews to understand teachers' practice is limited to my interpretation of their work, but interpretivist research appeared to be the most appropriate form of enquiry to support the research questions in this study. Therefore, I have

endeavoured to make clear the ways in which my personal and professional backgrounds may have influenced data gathering and data analysis in this study. The reader should bear these influences in mind in the next section which discusses how data were analysed.

3.11 Data Analysis

The research literature presents myriad ways to analyse qualitative data (Punch, 2009; Silverman, 2010). While I recognise that there is no ‘one way’ to analyse qualitative data (Robson, 2011), I was guided by the ‘grounded’ approach set out by Charmaz (2006, 2014). Indeed, it was Charmaz’s (2006) preference for “...flexible guidelines, not methodological rules, recipes, and requirements” that initially attracted me to her approach (p. 9). As such, these flexible guidelines provided a means for me to decide on how to analyse the data in a way that closely aligned with what participants were doing and saying in the field. The two sections that follow detail the way in which I drew upon Charmaz (2006, 2014) to analyse the observation and interview data. Data analysis was undertaken using the NVivo (version 9) software package.

3.11.1 Observations

As data collection started with observations, I begin by presenting an overview of how these data were analysed to understand teachers’ actions in their specific contexts. There were five major steps to my analysis of observation data and these are set out in Table 3-6.

The first step of my analysis involved using the insights from my pilot study. I used the four sensitizing concepts as a guide for data collection and data analysis: teacher-directed, teacher-guided, teacher-pupil negotiated, and pupil-initiated practice. Data analysis started at the outset of the study (Charmaz, 2006, 2014) and I broadly used these four sensitizing concepts as a guide. This involved initially reading and re-reading each observation in detail and thinking about them

in relation to these four concepts. As texts were examined, questions like ‘what is going on here’ and ‘by whom’ and ‘what are they trying to achieve’ stimulated my thinking. I repeated this reading phase with each observation that I analysed through all stages of analysis. After first reading an observation, I used “initial coding” to name small segments of the data on the transcript (Charmaz, 2006); this form of coding involved labelling small pieces of the data to assign meaning to them.

Table 3-6: Major Steps in Observation Data Analysis

Initial Coding	Labelling small pieces of the data to assign meaning
Comparison	Comparing and contrasting the initial codes with the open memos to explore any discrepancies in the data
Focused Coding	Creating more conceptual codes from initial codes
Elaboration	Major re-analysis of all existing data to track emergent issues related to the focused codes
Theoretical Sorting	Refining the focused codes into theoretical framing categories and integrating these categories into a ‘set’ or framework

In general, codes were attached to the data every two or three lines so that I could get a feel for what was happening in teachers’ classes. This involved creating a series of ‘nodes¹²’ in Nvivo to store the coded text. When I recognised something

¹² The term ‘node’ is used in NVivo software packages to describe a container used to store a collection of related ideas.

‘new’ in the data, I created a node to represent this development and stored the text by dragging and dropping it into this container. Thereafter, each time I recognised similar patterns in the texts, I was able to store this data in a pre-existing node container. In particular, following the advice of Charmaz (2014) initial coding was approached using “gerunds” to help me code the data as ‘actions’ or a state of ‘being’. According to many grounded theorists (Charmaz, 2014; Clarke, 2005; Dey, 1999; Glaser, 1978), coding data in this action-oriented way can allow a researcher to remain ‘open’ during the initial coding process and to view the data from the participants’ perspectives. This approach allowed me to attach action-oriented names to my node containers and start considering the significance of these in relation to the participant teachers’ practice. Therefore, I was able to amass a range of the recurring actions that the teachers and the pupils performed during my observations. It is important to highlight that initial codes were assigned to the data in a provisional way; these were subject to continual review and modification as the research process evolved.

I wish to make a critical point in relation to the way in which sensitizing concepts were used during the initial coding process. In the early stages of the analysis, these concepts were used only as a guide to the research process. In other words, during initial coding these were *not* used in a slavish way that dominated the analysis. I refrained from making the sensitizing concepts into pre-determined node containers from the outset of my analysis. Instead, I persevered with the initial coding of the transcripts and made an open “memo” for each of the sensitizing concepts (Charmaz, 2014). By contrast, Alexander’s notion of pedagogy remained a cogent device in relation to understanding teachers’ actions in their specific contexts. For a period, I also held a separate, open memo to track contextual issues influencing the actions performed in the classroom. Memo-writing involved writing mini reviews to compare data with data, data with initial codes, and initial codes with any broader categories and concepts that emerged (Charmaz, 2014; Clarke, 2005; Dey, 1999); I refer to these records as ‘open memos’ in this study to reflect the iterative way that I revised these during the

research process. Nvivo has a memo facility and I stored my memos for each sensitizing concept for easy recall and modification.

Maintaining the divide between initial coding and the open memos for the sensitizing concepts was important; it allowed me to generate a wide range of initial codes of both the teacher's actions and pupils' actions and to track simultaneously my ideas in relation to the sensitizing concepts with memos. This initial coding and open memo arrangement was a highly effective way to track the similarities within and between the participant teachers' practice. Conversely, tracking contextual issues across the six participant teachers' practice with one open memo quickly became unmanageable. The participant teachers themselves and their contexts were so diverse that I struggled to see any patterns or make any connections using a single open memo. This completely surprised me. I had to think long and hard about how to analyse the contextual issues associated with the definition of pedagogy used to guide this study.

I decided to use "diagramming" (Charmaz, 2014) or a series of "maps" (Clarke, 2005) to capture the individuality of each teacher and the uniqueness of their specific contexts. This sounds sophisticated, but my interpretation simply involved using a word document for each teacher and adding contextual details to this over time. In other words, if my ears 'pricked up' about a contextual issue when reading and re-read an observation, I opened the teacher's map and added this information to the document in a small text box. Rather than adding these text boxes of information to the document in a uniform way, I preferred to scatter these in a messy way to provoke review and re-arrangement as the study progressed. I found these maps an effective way to make a visual representation of each teacher's specific context and view contextual issues at a glance; I continued to build these maps throughout data analysis (see Appendix F for an example of one teacher's map).

The initial coding arrangement remained largely in place for several months: I started this process in January 2013 and continued until around mid-to-late May

2013. One might argue that I engaged in that form of analysis for too long. However, my rationale for remaining with initial coding for an extended period was so that I did not “jump to conclusions” about the teachers’ practice (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, p. 60). I wanted to transcend my own assumptions of teachers’ practice and avoid imposing the sensitizing concepts onto the data. As such, this extended initial analysis allowed me to “break into” (Corbin and Strauss, 2008) or “fracture” (Clarke, 2005) the data and take a fine-grained view of what was going on in teachers’ classes. I was also acutely aware of the limitations of software packages, such as Nvivo (Fielding, 2002; Seale, 2010). By storing segments of data in containers called nodes, I recognised the potential for this software to mask interactions and relationships between the teacher and the pupils; open memos were central to preserving these exchanges.

The second step of my analysis employed the grounded theory technique known as “constant comparison” (Charmaz, 2006). By virtue of simultaneously collecting and analysing data, I was also able to uncover discrepancies between the initial codes and my open memos. There were two main issues. Firstly, I felt that there was limited space in the open memos to report instances in the initial codes where pupils were taking on responsibilities in class. For example, there were initial codes entitled: ‘pupils taking responsibility for ‘leading’ parts of lessons or whole lessons’ and ‘pupils taking responsibility for organising and/or administrating in classes’. It was difficult to write about these initial codes in open memos dedicated to teacher-directed, teacher-guided, pupil-initiated, and teacher-pupil negotiated practice. Secondly, I was frustrated in my early observations when using the sensitizing concepts as a guide to collect data. These were developed from my pilot study and were predicated on the idea that I would recruit particular ‘types’ of teachers who would be doing particular things in their classes. In writing about the initial codes in the open memos, I realised I was drawing on examples from many different teachers’ practice to expound these different ways of working with classes. In other words, no teacher was repeatedly featuring in only one of these memos and this indicated that there was variation in the participant teachers’ practice.

These issues informed my understanding of the ‘next steps’ for analysis. Hence, the second major stage of data analysis involved reviewing all the existing data. This review triggered a shift in the study in two significant ways. Firstly, there was variation in the participant teachers’ practice and the existing sensitizing concepts were adapted from a representation of ‘*types*’ of *teachers* to reflect broader ‘*types*’ of *teaching*. This distinction was the key to interpreting and reporting the variety of ways that teachers were working with their classes. Secondly, from existing evidence, I constructed a fifth sensitizing concept. The category was entitled ‘pupil-led practice’ and, as I reviewed existing data, I used an open memo to document the ways in which pupils were taking responsibility for leading others in class.

The third step in my data analysis was “focused coding” (Charmaz, 2006). In general, this phase involved creating codes that were “...more directed, selective, and conceptual than word-by-word, line-by-line, and incident-by-incident coding” (p. 58). After initial coding for an extended period, I had a clearer idea of teachers’ practice and focused coding was a way to interpret larger segments of the data. This was a challenging process and I made use of the time when the teachers were on their summer break between June 2013 and July 2013 to complete this analysis. I had to make decisions about “which initial codes make the most analytic sense to categorize...data incisively and completely” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 58). More objectivist grounded theories (see for example Strauss and Corbin, 1990), set out an additional step in the coding process, ‘axial’ coding, which is used to make links between the emerging subcategories and broader conceptual categories. Charmaz (2006) believes that, however useful, axial coding is not necessary in constructivist grounded theory. She believes that, in some instances, the axial coding associated with objectivist grounded theories can constrain the scope of data analysis. Charmaz’s (2006) critique of axial coding relates to the specific frameworks that researchers are expected to apply. In contrast, constructivist grounded theory advocates that researchers “follow the leads that *they define* in their empirical material” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 61, emphasis added). Indeed,

Charmaz (2006) presents “memo-writing” as the “pivotal step” between the collection of data and writing the final draft of the study.

Drawing on my open memos for each sensitizing concept, I built the initial codes into focused codes. The names of my focused codes retained the names I used for the five sensitizing concepts: teacher-directed, teacher-guided, pupil-led, teacher-pupil negotiated and pupil-initiated practice. To shift initial codes into focused codes, I took the existing list of initial codes and clustered these together in different ways to reflect each of the sensitizing concepts. At this stage of my analysis, I aimed for the focused codes to remain quite broad in scope. In clustering the initial codes together, there were many occasions where an initial code appeared as part of several focused codes. For example, ‘teacher explaining’ was an initial code and there was potential for this to feature in teacher-directed, teacher-guided, pupil-led, teacher-pupil negotiated and pupil-initiated practice. Where there was potential for an initial code to feature in more than one of the focused codes, I re-analysed existing data and redefined the initial code to be particularly relevant to the assigned focused code. That is, ‘teacher explaining’ would be rather different as part of teacher-directed practice in comparison to teacher-pupil negotiated practice and so I redefined it to reflect each of these focused codes. Once I created the focused codes, they remained provisional in nature and subject to revision. When the observations re-started in mid-August after the summer break, I compared these provisional focused codes to the scenes I was observing in teachers’ classes during my observations.

The fourth step in my data analysis involved elaboration of emergent themes related to these focused codes. Having established five focused codes as ‘*types*’ of *teaching*, I realised that these only partially explained teachers’ day-to-day practice. Two major themes emerged in relation to the focused codes: firstly, teachers performed these types of teaching in a flexible way; and secondly, teachers created the conditions to perform these types of teaching through forms of negotiation with the pupils in their classes. This realisation sparked a major re-analysis of the existing data. I thoroughly re-read each observation. I also created

a memo for each of these themes entitled ‘performing the framing categories in flexible ways’ and ‘negotiation forms and shared perspectives’. Using these memos, I could track developments in my understanding, record examples, raise questions, and explore ideas. Moreover, as my understanding of flexibility and negotiation developed from existing data, I was better able to detect these themes during subsequent observations. I also tailored some observations to concentrate on recording examples of adaptability and negotiation in teachers’ practice based on the questions I raised in the associated memos for each theme.

The fifth and final step in my data analysis involved “theoretical sorting” of the focused codes I had created from my observations (Charmaz, 2014). This form of analysis started in the closing stages of my observations and continued long after these were complete. Theoretical sorting involved refining the focused codes into conceptual framing categories and drawing theoretical links to integrate these categories into a theoretical framework. In deciding to create *theoretical* framing categories, the research literature was revisited for guidance. Dey’s (1999) work was the first text to problematize comprehensively the ways in which researchers create categories to organise their findings in grounded theory. He argues that presenting clear rules to define what is ‘in’ and ‘out’ of a category in a quest for certainty is a deep-rooted trait of Western research. Yet, when categorising our data, he believes that using strict rules in an effort to reach for certainty merely increases the margin for “error” in our research. Indeed, Dey, drawing on the work of Rosch (1973), explains that clear rules not only increase margins for error in a category, but they fail to acknowledge the possibility for diversity in a category.

It was imperative that my categories reflected the day-to-day work of the participant teachers and preserved the diversity in how they performed teacher-directed, teacher-guided, pupil-led, teacher-pupil negotiated and pupil-initiated practices. Following the advice of Dey (1999), in this final stage of my analysis, I created “prototype” categories that enabled me to reflect these five different ways in which the participant teachers worked with their classes. Prototype categories represent a different approach to categorisation during grounded theory studies:

Membership of a category may therefore be assigned in terms of degrees of family resemblance to a prototype rather than all members sharing some set of common features (Dey, 1999, p. 70).

In essence, creating prototype categories involved a consideration of the focused codes and then narrowing down the *essential* features that are highly probable or most representative of each category. A prototype uses essential features to define a particular category, but these are:

...neither sufficient nor necessary for categorisation...our categorisation involves identifying a *kinship* with a prototype rather than assignment by strict definition (Dey, 1999, p. 72, emphasis added).

In narrowing down these essential features, open memos were used to compare initial codes with focused codes, the focused codes with the emerging prototype categories, and the prototype categories to on-going observations in teachers' classes. These open memos also prompted me to reflect on and interrogate the connections between these conceptual categories in terms of how they collectively explain teachers' practice.

Memo-writing kept track of the prototype categories I had created and these provided a means for contemplating the conceptual relationships between them. In other words, integrating these memos involved deciding how the prototype categories – teacher-directed, teacher-guided, pupil-led, teacher-pupil negotiated and pupil-initiated practice – were able to 'fit' together as a set. In fact, making claims to have generated a *theoretical* framework demands that explicit connections are made between the main categories emerging from a research study:

...we do not construct an isolated number of categories that have no relationship to each other. We have to use categories in conjunction, so we can be sure of capturing much of the significance of the data...Each category has to be considered in relation to the others so that we can ensure consistency in the way we conceptualize. We have to think not only about how the categories fit the data, but whether they do so in a way that suits our wider conceptual aims (Dey, 1999, pp. 104-105).

Dey (1999) continues to explain that a crucial step in developing a theoretical framework is identifying a “string” to integrate the individual categories derived from the research process. Figure 3-4 illustrates how Dey’s metaphor compels the researcher to draw connections between all constituent parts of a theoretical framework, showing how these categories function collectively and mapping their holistic parameters.

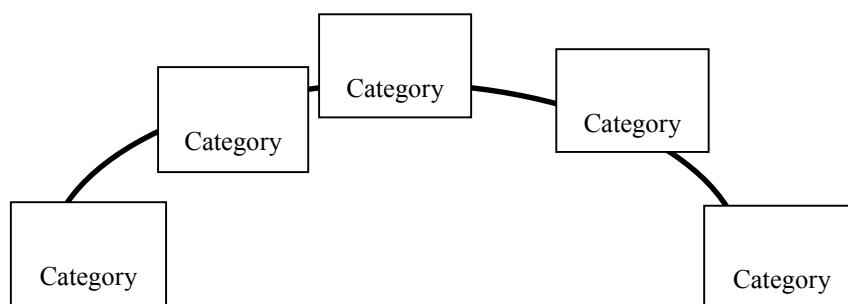


Figure 3-4: Making Connections Between Categories to Construct a Theoretical Framework (adapted from Dey, 1999)

To make the type of connections outlined in Figure 3-4, reading and re-reading the open memos expanded my thoughts about how to integrate these categories. This analysis led me to examine further the power dynamic that exists between the teacher and the pupils in classes. I traced the way in which the teachers shared the power for deciding what is said and what is done in class. The degree to which power is shared with regards to who takes the initiative – the teacher or the pupils – in class was the ‘string’ used to draw the five isolated prototype categories into an integrated theoretical framework. Chapter 4 begins by presenting an overview of this theoretical framework, explaining the main elements and the relationships between them.

To recap, this study constructed a theoretical framework from the analysis of observation data; an overview of this process is presented in Figure 3-5.

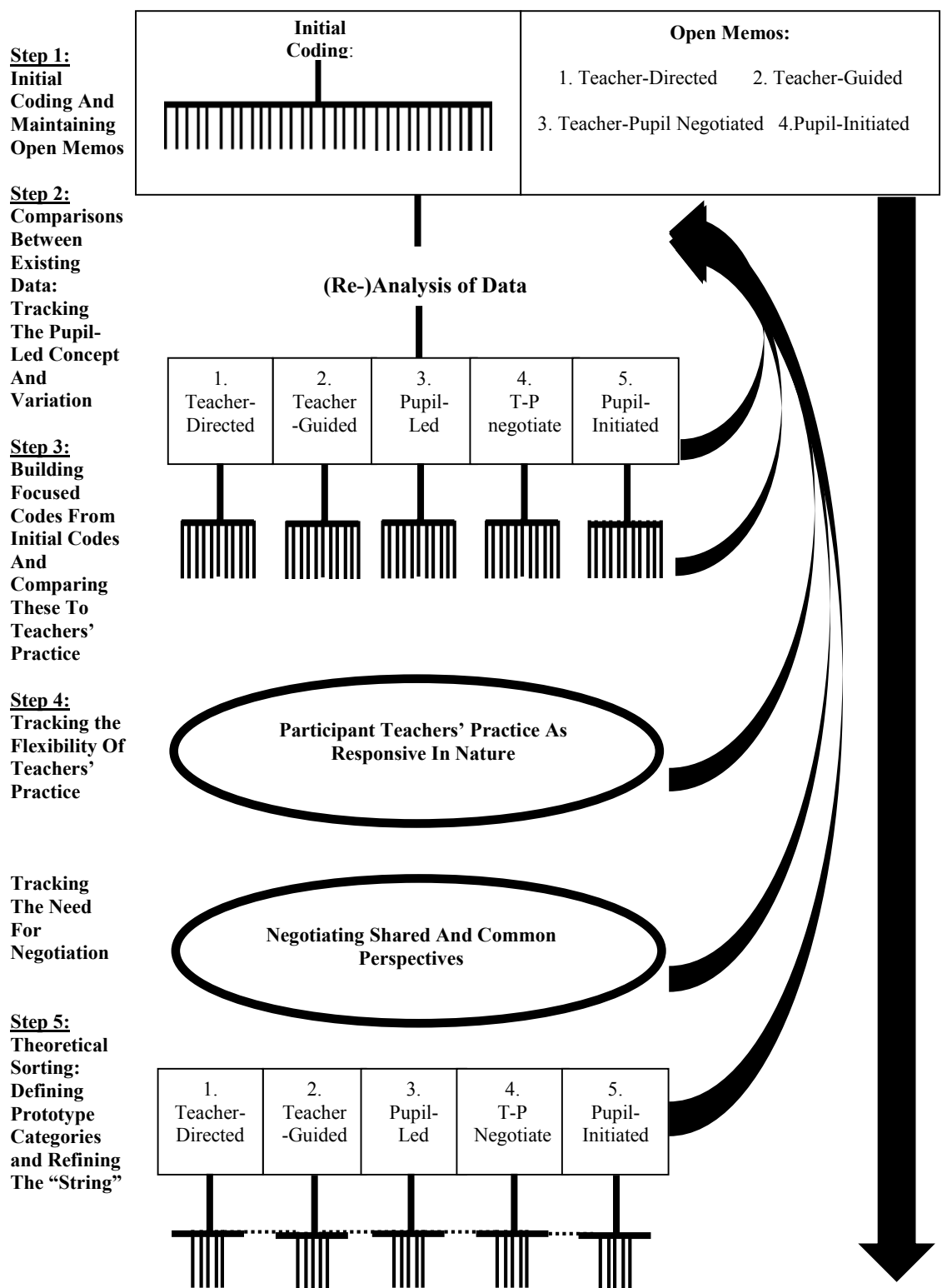


Figure 3-5: Overview of Observation Data Analysis

This framework features five framing categories and a 'teacher-pupil power dynamic' element. The five framing categories represent the patterns of classroom

interaction identified in this study, i.e.: teacher-directed, teacher-guided, pupil-led, pupil-initiated, and teacher-pupil negotiated practice. An alternate approach to the categorisation process was adopted, which involved creating a ‘prototype’ for each of these categories to preserve the variation displayed in the participant teachers’ practices.

The ‘teacher-pupil power dynamic’ element was identified as a way to integrate these categories into a conceptual ‘set’ and represent the practices of all the teachers who participated in this study. This framework will form the basis of discussion in subsequent chapters of this thesis: Chapter 4 presents an overarching account of this framework before exploring the five framing categories in more detail; Chapters 5 and 6 discuss dimensions of the ‘teacher-pupil power dynamic’ element; Chapter 7 reflects on what we can learn from this framework and proposes an expansion to Alexander’s (2008b) definition of pedagogy

3.11.2 Interviews

The formal interviews were conducted after all observations were complete and this section moves on to discuss how this data set was analysed in relation to the theoretical framework developed in the study. In essence, the process of analysing the interview data was both deductive and inductive in nature. On the one hand, it was deductive in the sense that there were specific ideas from my observation work that I wanted to pursue further. On the other hand, it was inductive in nature as the interview data provided an opportunity to extend the insights gained during my observation work. There were three major steps to the analysis of formal interview data and these are presented in Table 3-7.

Table 3-7: Major Steps in Formal Interview Data Analysis

Categorisation	Reading transcripts and assigning data to fill out the categories and concepts that comprise the theoretical framework.
Comparison	Comparing and contrasting the data generated by interview data analysis with the theoretical framework generated by observation data analysis.
Theoretical Integration	Integrating the data generated by the categorisation process into the theoretical framework.

The first step of my interview analysis involved using the categories and concepts from the theoretical framework generated as part of my observational data analysis. I describe this first step of analysis as ‘categorisation’. It is acknowledged that there is much debate and contestation relating to the need for, and most effective types of, an approach to categorisation in grounded theory research known as ‘theoretical coding’ (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Indeed, Charmaz (2014) documents the ambiguity as to whether theoretical coding is an applied or emergent process. There have been many analytical frameworks specifically developed which can be applied to further refine connections between the categories that emerge from data; see, for example, the different frameworks set out by Clarke (2005), Corbin and Strauss (2008), and Glaser (1978). I refer to the first stage of my analysis as ‘categorisation’ as I refrained from using any rigid framework defined by others to analyse data. Instead, I followed the leads from my observation data. More specifically, the products from the theoretical framework were used as a guide and I sought to fill out these categories and concepts with additional insights from the formal interviews. The following four areas were used as an initial framing to categorise

the formal interview data: general experiences of the observations, variation in teachers' practice, responsiveness of teachers' practice, and getting the class to work 'well'¹³.

This process initially involved reading and re-reading each interview transcript in detail and simultaneously thinking about them in relation to these four areas. After initially reading an interview transcript, I worked through them a few more times and assigned small chunks of the data to these four areas. This process involved creating nodes under each of these areas to label the data and track the commonalities or diversities with existing understanding. I used the previous memos created during the observations as a reference point of 'existing understanding'. In general, as I created nodes under each of these areas, I aimed to use 'in vivo' coding as much as possible; what Charmaz (2014) refers to as preserving the participants' use of "special terms". For the study reported here this coding technique involved paying attention to the participants' use of language and, more specifically, incorporating this language to name the nodes within each of the pre-existing areas.

Using 'in vivo' coding preserves participants' meanings and the researcher can reflect these in the presentation of data. As I was conducting this categorisation as the first step of my analysis, I also created a *new* set of memos for each of the categories and concepts of the theoretical framework. In a similar way to the process described earlier, I used these memos to record the on-going developments in my thinking and as a reflective outlet for ideas that needed investigation in subsequent interviews (Charmaz, 2006, 2014). In other words, consistent with the 'grounded' nature of this study, these memos tracked developments arising from the analysis of an interview, informing the conduct of subsequent interviews.

¹³ This area actually related to the 'negotiation' displayed in teachers' practices. However, to make this topic more accessible and part of a flowing conversation during the interviews, I referred to this as "getting the class to work 'well'". My contention was that I believe negotiation is a fundamental prerequisite for "getting the class to work 'well'" and this stimulated much debate with the teachers during the interviews regarding *how* they achieve this in their day-to-day practice.

The second step of my interview analysis employed the grounded theory technique known as “constant comparison” (Charmaz, 2006); this was the main thrust of the inductive nature of the analysis. Whilst I was interested in pursuing topics related to the four areas with each participant, this process was not straightforward or linear in nature. I concurrently compared the emerging themes from each individual interview and these emerging themes in relation to existing categories and concepts. In other words, I continually “zig-zagged” (Charmaz, 2014) between the data I was building under each category and the extant theoretical framework in an iterative and interactive fashion. Hence, the exact focus of each interview discussion varied from participant-to-participant as I confirmed understandings, recognised new gaps to be filled and explored areas of ambiguity. Memos were a central tool that I used to reflect on these developments and make adaptations for each subsequent interview.

The third step of my interview analysis involved theoretical integration. Once all the interviews were complete, I continued to review the interview data to explore further the sub-themes I had gathered for each of the four areas. I scrutinized these sub-themes and looked for points of similarity and divergence with my existing understanding of the theoretical framework. I recorded these developments in the memos I generated during the interviews. To hone the theoretical framework I merged the memos I generated from the analysis of observations and the memos I generated from the interview analysis. This process involved drafting and re-drafting an integrated version of these memos that preserved the findings of the observations and acknowledged the developments from the interview data.

3.12 Concluding Remarks: Reaching for Quality by Verifying the Credibility of Data

Throughout this chapter, I have aimed to provide a comprehensive overview of the research process. My intention was to enhance the “visibility” (Mishler, 1990) of the research process so others could judge the “quality” (Silverman, 2010) of the findings. Traditionally, academic research has been judged in relation to three

main criteria: replicability, reliability, and validity (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2009; Creswell and Miller, 2000; Guba and Lincoln, 2005; Silverman, 2010). These criteria mainly reflect the terminology and procedures of the positivist research tradition (Creswell, 2009). There have been major debates in the qualitative research literature regarding the appropriate criteria for judging the quality of research studies. In general, these debates have adopted two main positions:

1. There are academics who maintain that qualitative research is rather distinct from quantitative research and, therefore, it requires its own language and criteria upon which it can be judged (see, for example, Guba and Lincoln, 1989).
2. There are academics who argue that if qualitative research is to be respected, it should, therefore, adopt the mainstream language and criteria of quantitative research to make judgements on the quality of a study (see, for example, Miles and Huberman, 1984; Morse *et al.*, 2002).

I do not wish to enter into an extended discussion of, and settle into, any one of these positions. Rather, I wish to first discuss the impracticalities of replicability and ‘narrow’ interpretations of reliability for my research and then move on to examine validity in more detail.

Creswell (2009) dismisses replicability and reliability out of hand, claiming these terms only have limited relevance for qualitative research. If we consider the following interpretations of these terms, then we start to see the nub of Creswell’s argument: replicability relates to the likelihood of another researcher conducting a similar study and producing the same findings; reliability relates to the extent to which the researcher applies tests or procedures with consistency and accuracy in all circumstances. I concur with Creswell’s (2009) views of replicability as unsuitable criteria for judging the quality of this study. In relation to replicability, for instance:

- My unique background and interests would have directed my attention to different things in comparison to other researchers. It would be unlikely that another researcher would find similar findings from observing the same sample of teachers;
- The people and places that I investigated were unique and the experiences I captured revealed contrasts from individual to individual. If I myself repeated this study with six separate teachers, it is highly unlikely that I would be able to generate the same findings.

I acknowledge the issues Creswell (2009) identifies with ‘narrow’ interpretations of reliability and these appear to be unfit for judging the quality of my study. In relation to reliability, for example:

- My observations and interviews were open-ended in nature and so there was no need for me to administer any formal tests or procedures;
- I made major adaptations to the focus of observations and, to a lesser extent, the interviews schedules. These methods were constantly adapted.

However, Hammersley (1992b) adopts a quite different view of reliability for qualitative research studies. He explains that reliability:

...refers to the degree of consistency with which instances [of data] are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions (p. 67).

This quotation defines reliability as a more centrally important concern for qualitative researchers and was the stance adopted in the present study. As explained in preceding paragraphs, I made concerted efforts to write memos throughout the data analysis process. These memos were a crucial part of tracking developments in the categorisation process, providing a “degree of consistency” in my analysis of participant teachers’ practices “on different occasions” (Hammersley, 1992b).

Validity, on the other hand, cannot be dismissed as easily. This term is “highly debated” in the qualitative research literature (Creswell, 2009). According to Silverman (2010), the term ‘validity’ “is another word for truth” and this relates to the extent to which our research “accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers” (p. 275). However, making connections between ‘validity’ and ‘truth’ appears to be at odds with the philosophical position explained earlier, where I argued that it is not possible to discover one truth or a grand theory of knowledge. Does this connection between validity and a desire for the ‘truth’ render the term unsuitable to judge the quality of my research? Is this quest for the ‘truth’ contradictory to what I have set out to achieve? Williams (2002) discusses the complexities of this debate and makes a helpful distinction. He explains that there is an interconnection between “truth and truthfulness” (Williams, 2002):

Truthfulness implies a respect for the truth. This relates to both of the virtues...of truth, which I shall call *Accuracy* and *Sincerity*: you do the best you can to acquire true beliefs, and what you can say reveals what you believe. The authority of academics must be rooted in their truthfulness in both these respects: they *take care* and they do *not lie* (p. 11, emphasis added).

There are similarities between the comments of Williams (2002) and the expectations of validity in qualitative research as outlined by Silverman (2010). Both imply that the quest for the truth, or validity, is related to the faithful representation of what a researcher has found out during his or her study. My interpretation of these views is that the validity of qualitative research is connected to technical or epistemological matters, but it also encompasses a moral obligation on the part of the researcher to “take care” and “not lie” (Williams, 2002). Over and above these ideas about “accuracy and sincerity”, there was a further layer of validity pertaining to the present research study.

Since I developed a *theoretical* framework based on my analysis of observation and interview data, I was conscious of the need for this construct to be a reasonable and appropriate representation of the participant teachers’ practice. Maxwell (2012), in the same vein as the work of Dey (1999) presented in

preceding paragraphs, underscores the importance of what he calls “theoretical validity”:

Theoretical validity thus refers to an account’s validity as a *theory*... Any theory has two components: the concepts or categories that the theory employs, and the relationships that are thought to exist among these concepts... The first refers to the validity of the blocks from which the researcher builds a model, as these are applied to the setting or phenomenon being studied; the second refers to the validity of the way the blocks are put together... (p. 140, original emphasis).

According to Maxwell (2012) then, in making a claim to have developed a theoretical framework in this study, there are expectations that extend beyond the need for “accuracy and sincerity”. There was also a need to consider how this framework functions to explain, as well as to describe and interpret, the practices of the participant teachers. In other words, how can I be sure that these abstracted categories and the connections I traced between them ‘fit’ what these teachers were doing in practice? The integration of the conceptual categories developed in this study therefore required careful consideration (Dey, 1999; Maxwell, 2012). With my observation work primarily informing the construction of the theoretical framework, the interview phase of the present study provided scope to investigate the relationships between these conceptual categories. Using the interview responses of the participant teachers to hone the theoretical framework, were the crucial steps taken in this study to address Maxwell’s (2012) demands for “theoretical validity”.

Researchers have pursued interpretations of validity in the qualitative research literature in related, but slightly different, ways using terms such as “trustworthiness” (Mishler, 1990), “authenticity” (Lincoln and Guba, 2000), and “credibility” (Charmaz, 2014; Higgs, 2001). Notwithstanding these developments, Silverman (2010) posits that there is no “golden key” to ensure validity in qualitative research. Drawing on an interpretation of validity that Charmaz (2014) refers to as “credibility”, I was aware of the expectations specifically related to grounded theory research. Rather than waiting until my study was complete to

consider credibility, I used Charmaz's (2014) guidance and built various techniques into my study from the outset. I verified the data in several ways and I have mentioned these throughout this chapter, but before closing this methodological discussion the major features are listed below as a summary for readers to judge the quality of the research:

- I developed my skills as a researcher by attending a qualitative research methods course and completing a pilot study. I was aware that “research is only as good as the investigator” (Morse *et al.*, 2002, p. 10) and developing these skills improved the details captured in my observation data;
- I remained in the field for an extended period to gain “intimate familiarity” (Charmaz, 2014) and build rapport with the people and places I was studying;
- I used informal interviews as part of my observations to check my interpretations of meaning with the participant teachers;
- I would argue I gathered “sufficient data to merit...claims” (Charmaz, 2014) by varying the range, number, and focus of my observations;
- I used “systematic comparisons” (Charmaz, 2014), to compare the categories I created to the observation and interview data I generated¹⁴. This involved “...a search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study” (Creswell and Miller, 2000, p. 126), helping to refine the categories and make “strong links” between them (Charmaz, 2014);
- As part of making “systematic comparisons”, I specifically sought out deviant cases or discrepancies in the data. I did this analysis to either

¹⁴ I used systematic comparison or triangulation across my field notes of observations and the interview data. Whilst using this approach, I am not assuming that there is a ‘truth’ evidently ‘there’ to be discovered (Charmaz, 2014; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Tracy, 2010; Silverman, 2010). Rather, I use this approach to “...increase scope, deepen understanding, and encourage consistent (re)interpretation” (Tracy, 2010, p. 843).

identify and fill these gaps or make the reader aware of these anomalies. Creswell (2009) contends that this approach presents a more realistic account to the reader;

- I used reflexivity to explain my personal and professional backgrounds to point up the potential for bias in terms of how I may have interpreted and represented the data (Langdridge, 2007);
- I specifically pursued aspects of the theoretical framework during the formal interviews to check if it would “make sense to your participants” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 338). Creswell (2009) refers to a similar technique as “member checking” where participants have the opportunity to review reports or models and comment on their accuracy and representativeness;
- When I present evidence in subsequent chapters, I use extended examples, or what Geertz (1973) termed “thick description”, from my observation and interview data. Charmaz (2014) argues that presenting evidence in this way enables the reader to “form an independent assessment – and *agree* with your claims” (p. 337, original emphasis).

Throughout the remainder of this thesis my concern for demonstrating the credibility of the theoretical framework continues. Following on from the final point in the preceding list, I move on to present a detailed and coherent explanation of the findings.

Table 3-8 sets out the main parts of the theoretical framework, and the source of data used to exemplify these claims, presented in each of the three findings chapters.

Table 3-8: Presentation of the Theoretical Framework in Subsequent Chapters

Chapter	Aspect of the theoretical framework to be discussed	Principal source of data
4	Presentation of the theoretical framework and a detailed overview of the five framing categories	Observations
5	The varied nature of practice and flexible deployment of the framing categories	Observations
6	The role of teacher-pupil relationships in relation to the decisions made about classroom practice	Interviews

Chapter 4 - Teachers' Day-To-Day Practices: Mapping the Framing Categories

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided a detailed overview of the research process, highlighting the major steps in data analysis that led to the construction of a theoretical framework to represent the participant teachers' practices. This framework, comprised of five framing categories and a 'teacher-pupil power dynamic' element, is presented in Figure 4-1.

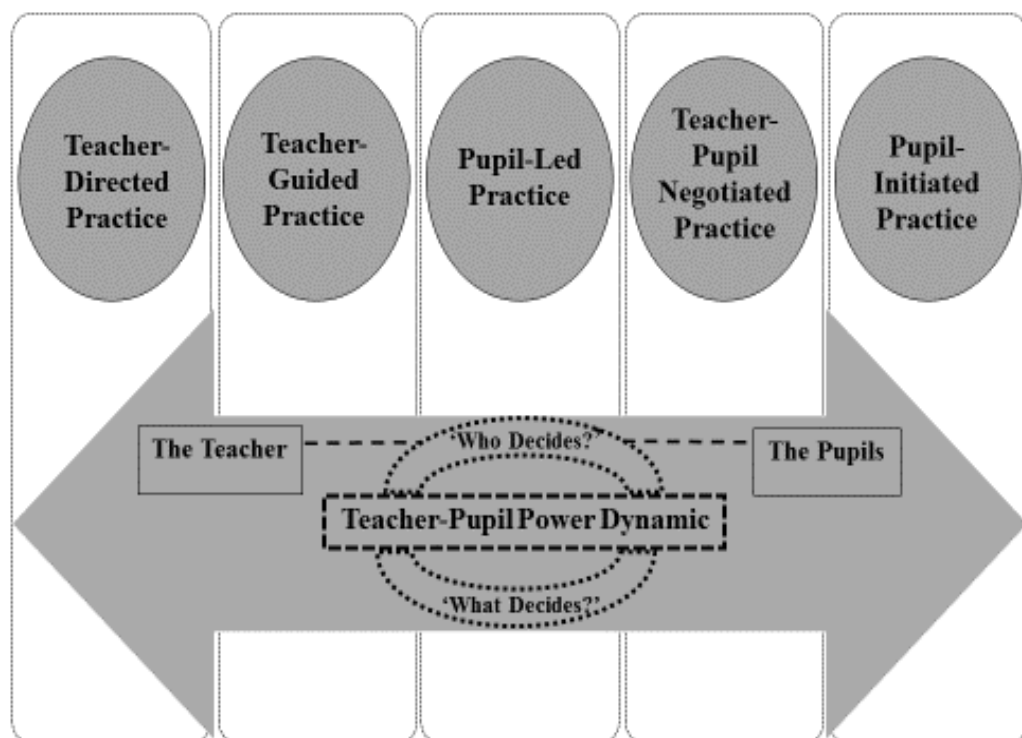


Figure 4-1: The Theoretical Framework Derived from Observation and Interview Data

The purpose of this current chapter is to *start* the process of exemplifying this theoretical framework to my readership. The chapter is structured into two main sections. The first section engages with Figure 4-1 to present an initial overview of this theoretical framework. This account will provide an outline sketch of the two main elements – the 'five framing categories' and the 'teacher-pupil power

dynamic’ – highlighting the connections within and between these constituent parts. This overview should provide a reader with insights into the participant teachers’ practices, allowing later sections of this chapter (and subsequent chapters) to examine the main parts of this theoretical framework in more detail.

Building upon this initial overview, the second, more extensive, section will examine each of the five framing categories in turn, i.e.: teacher-directed, teacher-guided, pupil-led, teacher-pupil negotiated, and pupil-initiated practice. A discursive overview of each framing category is presented followed by examples of teachers deploying this form of classroom practice captured during my observation work. A key concern for the exemplification of the five framing categories throughout this section is to provide the reader with a detailed picture of the teachers’ practices. Rather than providing a few brief extracts from observation fieldnotes, it seemed appropriate to provide the reader with extensive extracts from the classrooms that featured in this study. This detailed account should give a clear sense of the ways in which particular scenes unfolded and show how the micro-interactions that took place between the teachers and pupils are captured by each framing category.

4.2 The Theoretical Framework: An Overview

This section presents the theoretical framework – featuring five framing categories and a ‘teacher-pupil power dynamic’ element – derived from the observation and interview phases of the research (see Figure 4-1). It focuses first on the five framing categories. Close analysis of observation fieldnotes revealed the *different* ways in which participant teachers interacted with the pupils during their day-to-day practice. For instance, there were moments where the teacher very largely controlled classroom situations, other moments where the teacher and pupils collectively debated the direction of classroom situations, and still other moments where a pupil(s) took control of classroom situations. The following five framing categories were constructed to delineate the variation in these interaction patterns:

teacher-directed, teacher-guided, pupil-led, teacher-pupil negotiated, and pupil-initiated practice.

Drawing these five framing categories together and considering them collectively, captures the diverse ways in which all participant teachers interacted with their classes. These identifiable patterns of teacher-pupil interaction *differed* in the degree of control in relation to what was said and done in the classroom. In other words, there is a shift in the degree of control in regards to who takes the initiative – the teacher or the pupils – in class as the categories progress from teacher-directed practice to pupil-initiated practice. Generally, this shift in control took place in the following ways:

- in teacher-directed practice, the teacher remained in charge of a section of a lesson and she or he alone decided what was said and done in class;
- in teacher-guided practice, the teacher still decided what took place in class by setting up various situations, but there was scope for the pupils to respond in different ways;
- in pupil-led practice, the teacher requested or designated pupils to take on responsibility in class and the pupils then had some scope to decide what takes place in a section of a lesson;
- in teacher-pupil negotiated practice, the way ahead in a section of a lesson was discussed and debated between the teacher and the pupils;
- in pupil-initiated practice, the pupils were in charge of what was said and done in a section of a lesson and the teacher responded in improvised ways.

It is difficult, however, to consider these framing categories in isolation from the teacher-pupil power dynamic element of the theoretical framework. Turning to look at the teacher-pupil power dynamic element, this spanned observation and interview work and represents the *unequal*, but not wholly asymmetric relationship that existed between the teachers and the pupils who participated in this study. Presenting this power dynamic element as unequally weighted in a

teacher's favour does *not* relegate the role of pupils to a place where they straightforwardly respond to commands during classes. Rather, this element of the theoretical framework recognises that pupil agency, to a degree at least, patterned the practices of the participant teachers. As presented in Figure 4-1, this teacher-pupil power dynamic element is composed of two related dimensions. Briefly engaging with these – the 'who decides' dimension and the 'what decides' dimension – will reveal how the deployment of the five framing categories intersected with the asymmetric nature of teacher-pupil relationships.

Firstly, the 'who decides' dimension recognises that while participant teachers had a *central* role to play in relation to what is said and done in the classroom, they used this role to interact with the pupils in a variety of ways. In other words, the participant teachers shared the power with the pupils with regards to deciding what was said and what was done in class. The following key features identified during my observation work illuminate how participant teachers incorporated the pupils into their classroom practices: the participant teachers 'fine-tuned' learning experiences to the needs and were alert to the abilities of the pupils in advance of lessons taking place; the participant teachers were 'responsive' during the immediate act of teaching to tailor their practices to meet the specific requirements of classes; the participant teachers 'negotiated' the learning intentions for lessons with pupils.

Secondly, the 'what decides' dimension represents the common set of factors – respect, familiarity, time, and context – identified during my formal interview work that shape teacher-pupil relationships. The participant teachers' accounts of their practice revealed that these relationships informed the decisions they made about how to interact with the pupils in their classes. With the participants viewing these relationships with pupils as largely reciprocal in nature, this provided scope for pupils to play a role in deciding what happened or did not happen in the classroom via the deployment of pupil-led, teacher-pupil negotiated, and pupil-initiated practices. However, the interactive 'mix' of these four main factors could create classroom situations that over-rode the reciprocal potential of these

relationships, constraining teachers to perform teacher-directed and teacher-guided framing categories more readily than the others. Recognising the participant teachers' efforts to make sense of these four constantly changing factors, and make decisions about their practice, demonstrates how the five framing categories were carefully employed against the backdrop of school and classroom life.

4.2.1 Section summary

This section has presented a broad outline of the theoretical framework derived from the observation and interview phases of this study. It has shown how the five framing categories individually capture the *different* ways in which participant teachers interacted with classes while functioning collectively to illustrate the shift in control from teacher to pupil as categories transfer from teacher-directed to pupil-initiated practices. The 'teacher-pupil power dynamic' element represents the *unequal*, but not wholly asymmetric relationship that was displayed between the teachers and the pupils in this study. While two related dimensions – 'who decides' and 'what decides' – of this 'teacher-pupil power dynamic' acknowledge the scope for pupil agency to pattern classroom practice, teachers themselves often made sense of a wide range of factors that enabled and constrained their deployment of the five framing categories.

4.3 The Theoretical Framework: Mapping the Framing Categories

This section presents a detailed account of the five framing categories, considering these on an individual basis in their 'prototype' form. It will be recalled from the methodology chapter that these 'prototypes' were created by narrowing down the essential features of each category. While this approach to the categorisation process preserved the variation within these categories, the remainder of this chapter will present a more straightforward account of these framing categories. This decision has not been taken to oversimplify the day-to-day work of the participant teachers, but rather my intention is to provide a solid foundation for the

reader in order to build additional layers of complexity into the theoretical framework in subsequent chapters.

Before moving on to discuss these framing categories in more detail, it seems important to highlight that not all participant teachers had the same range or specific use of these in practice. The descriptive data in Table 4-1 provides a summary of each participant teacher's range and the composition of framing categories captured during observations of their practice.

Table 4-1: An Overview of the Range and Composition of Framing Categories Captured in Teachers' Practice

Teacher	Range of Framing Categories	Composition of Framing Categories Captured in Practice
Gaynor	3/5	Teacher-Directed, Teacher-Guided, Teacher-Pupil Negotiated
Roddy	3/5	Teacher-Directed, Teacher-Guided, Pupil-Initiated
Stanley	4/5	Teacher-Directed, Teacher-Guided, Pupil-Initiated, Pupil-Led
Seymour	3/5	Teacher-Directed, Teacher-Guided, Pupil-Led
Erika	4/5	Teacher-Directed, Teacher-Guided, Teacher-Pupil Negotiated, Pupil-Led
Jessie	5/5	Teacher-Directed, Teacher-Guided, Teacher-Pupil Negotiated, Pupil-Initiated, Pupil-Led

These framing categories are examined in the next section of this chapter and reference will be made to the way in which 'all' or 'some' of the participant teachers employed these during my observation work. Table 4-1 will be a useful

reference point as this chapter unfolds. The next section begins by discussing the first of these five framing categories, which is entitled ‘teacher-directed practice: the teacher ‘in charge’.

4.3.1 Teacher-directed practice: the teacher ‘in charge’

Teacher-directed practice generally involved the teacher being explicitly ‘in charge’ of a section of the lesson. The teacher was ‘in charge’ in the sense that she or he led a series of acts relating to what, how, when, and where particular actions could happen in the class. The teacher acted to set out the content for a section of a lesson by using a lot of explanation and often accompanying this with a teacher and/or pupil demonstration. In this way, the teacher made his or her expectations immediately clear to the pupils and there could be a regular re-stating of the task as the teacher aimed to move the lesson in the desired direction. For the most part, the whole class or a smaller sub-group of pupils listened to the opening explanation(s) from the teacher. Once the opening explanation was complete, the teacher often used some ‘confirmation questions’ to gauge if the pupils were “clear” or if they “understood” what was expected; pupils could ask for further explanation and information. Thereafter, the pupils were expected to follow these routines and instructions and the teacher very often made the decisions regarding when to start, when to stop, and when to move on to a related or different task. In this way, teachers could dictate the flow of the lesson. On some occasions the arrangement of when to start, when to stop, and when to move on was decided in advance based on a time setting or a particular number of efforts at a task.

While the pupils were working in this teacher-directed arrangement there was opportunity for the teacher to circulate around the class or remain in a fixed position to work in a variety of ways with the whole class and/or a smaller sub-group of pupils:

- they re-stated the task;
- they praised the pupils;

- they provided analysis of performance by describing a skill they had seen or by talking about what happened during a performance, and;
- they provided specific feedback by supplying any form of information delivered before, during or after a task to improve performance.

Though there were some interruptions to the flow of activity from time to time, there was generally a continual flow of work from pupils during teacher-directed practice. The recurring patterns specifically associated with teacher-directed practice are presented in Figure 4-2:

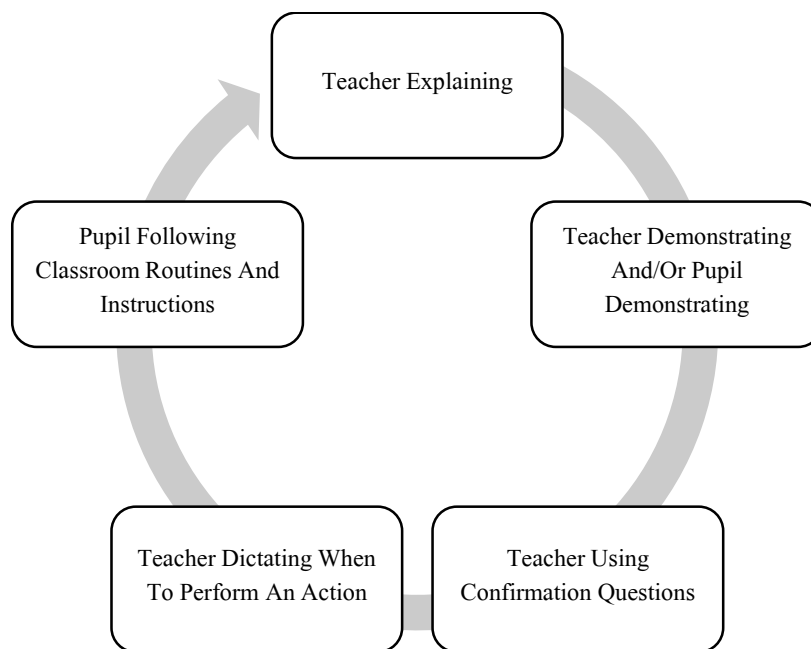
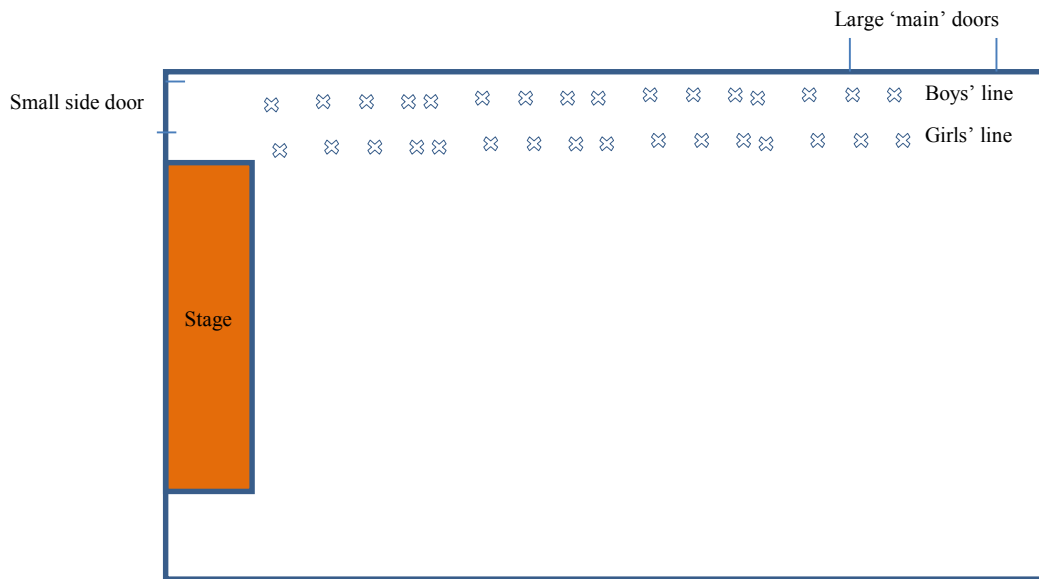


Figure 4-2: The Recurring Patterns of Teacher-Directed Practice

The following extract from my fieldnotes is from an observation with Erika whilst she acted in a teacher-directed way during a section of a lesson. In this extract, she worked with an S1 class in their second lesson of a social dance unit:

The boys and girls are brought together momentarily and are asked to sit on the floor so Erika can explain the focus and intentions of the lesson. The class will work on a Scottish Dance called “The Gay Gordons”. To start the social dance lesson, Erika asks the boys and girls to “line up” separately along the length of the assembly hall. This arrangement has the

boys standing side-by-side in one stretched out line and the girls standing immediately in front of the boys in a similar side-by-side formation:



Erika stands in the middle of the hall and explains that the focus of the warm up will be the “skip change of step”. This step sequence will be used to travel across the width of the hall with the girls’ line working at the same time, followed by a boys’ line working at the same time. Erika demonstrates what this step pattern should look like in front of the whole class and continually repeats the phrase “right, right, left, left” to indicate the stepping sequence of her feet as she performs it. After this demonstration, the class are asked if they “understand” and then they start to perform back and forth in these two lines. The step sequence is rehearsed for several minutes. In the initial stages of practising the step sequence the lines make their way across the hall on each of Erika’s “go” signals and after a while the lines are told that they can go when the group in front passes the half-way point in their journey across the hall. The practice moved on via a demonstration from Erika to include a turn and then the same step pattern is used to travel in a backwards direction. Erika offers several pointers to the whole class in relation to working on the balls of the feet and taking short, sharp steps. (Erika on 31/10/2013)

Working in a teacher-directed way for a section of a lesson, as exemplified in the preceding extract, was common amongst all the participant teachers. This extract reveals how Erika was ‘in charge’ of this section of the lesson. For instance, she took charge of the lesson by not only deciding that the class would work on a

particular Scottish dance, but she also identified a key step sequence that would be used as part of a warm up task. Erika provided a clear demonstration in relation to what she was looking for and she asked the class if they “understood” what is expected. Initially there is a “go” command for the pupils to start the task. It is Erika who made the decision to move the class on to work on a related task after a period of time. She provided information to improve the pupils’ performance throughout this section of the lesson.

4.3.2 Teacher-guided practice: the teacher ‘setting up’ situations

Teacher-guided practice generally involved the teacher ‘setting up’ situations in which the pupils have to formulate some kind of response: at times, these situations could be more tightly constrained and last for only a short section of a lesson; at other times, these situations could be more open-ended and lasted for an extended section of the lesson. In ‘setting up’ a situation, the teacher initially engaged in some explanation and discussion to make clear the constrained or open-ended nature of these boundaries.

For the most part, the whole class or a smaller sub-group of pupils listened to the opening explanation(s) from the teacher; there could be impromptu discussions here as pupils asked spontaneous questions about the situation described by the teacher. The teachers’ use of questioning was a key part of setting up a situation as open-ended or constrained. In more tightly constrained situations the teacher used short response questions where the pupils had to formulate a response by recalling ideas from previous weeks; this helped to bring particular knowledge and ideas into the lesson.

The teacher could also set up a more tightly constrained situation:

- by using a set of limited options for pupils to consider and then allowing them to choose which one they thought was the ‘best’ answer;

- by using a teacher or pupil demonstration to provide the focus for some particular questions, and;
- by providing examples of a hypothetical event to provoke a series of responses from the pupils.

In open-ended situations, the teacher used questions that had a range of possible solutions or where the pupils had to apply their knowledge to solve a problem within the situation. After a situation had been ‘set up’ by the teacher, the expectation was for pupils to formulate a verbal or movement-related response. In formulating a response, pupils engage in the sharing of information and ideas. This could be immediate sharing in constrained situations or in open situations. It could involve experimentation and investigation over a more extended period of time by working as an individual or as part of a group.

Sharing information in both constrained and open situations could take on various arrangements: sharing information between a pupil(s) with the teacher; sharing information in pairs; sharing information in groups; sharing information between one pupil and the whole class; sharing information between one group and the whole class. It is important to emphasise here that this ‘sharing’ of information and ideas also included the times when one pupil took over or dominated the discussion in a pair or group arrangement by assuming responsibility over others. The recurring patterns associated with teacher-guided practice are presented in Figure 4-3:

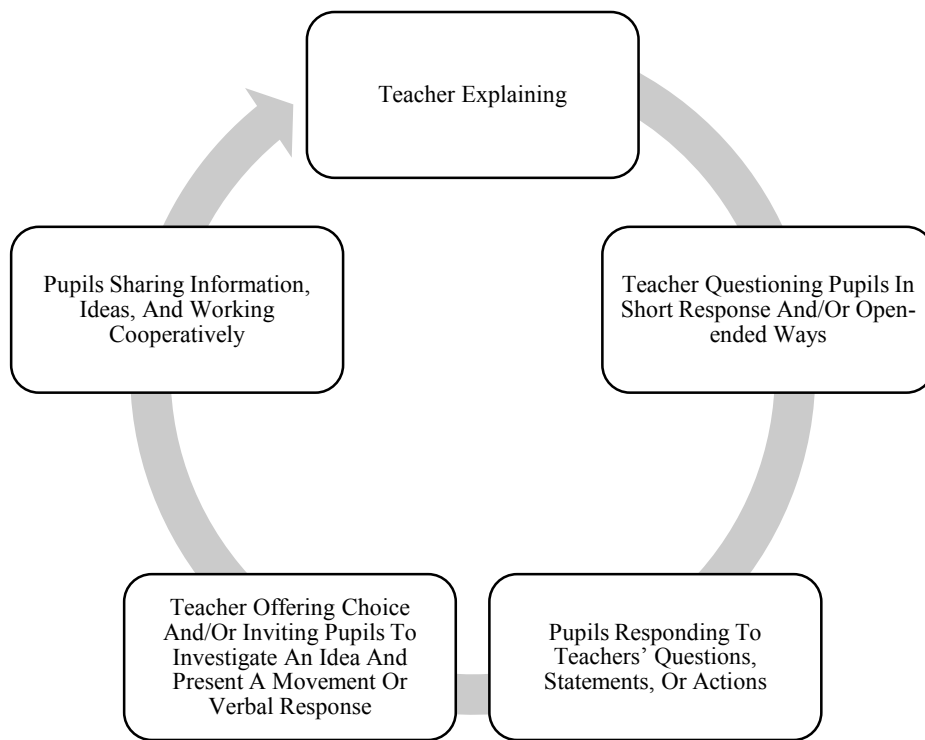


Figure 4-3: The Recurring Patterns of Teacher-Guided Practice

I will present two excerpts from my fieldnotes to provide an overview of teachers working in a teacher-guided way during a section of a lesson. The first excerpt is from an observation of Gaynor’s practice. Here she worked with an S2 basketball class and I have selected this example to illustrate a more constrained situation where the teacher was looking for the pupils to arrive at particular knowledge and ideas.

The boys are spread side-by-side and sit along a line on the games hall floor; all are facing towards Gaynor and a pupil, Derrick, who has been asked to help with a demonstration. Derrick has the ball on the end line of a cross court; Gaynor is standing a few metres away and facing towards him. Gaynor explains that Derrick is going to dribble his way across the court trying to get to the other side; she is going to shadow his movements. Derrick dribbles forward and Gaynor moves towards him and takes up a position where her knees are slightly bent, her weight is on the balls of her feet, and she is constantly on the move. This movement is mostly backwards as she “shadows” Derrick, using small shuffling steps. She has one arm extended straight out from her body at shoulder height, pointing

towards Derrick and the other arm is up at shoulder height pointing out to the side. Whilst Gaynor is performing she is constantly chatting to the class. Her chatting here is related to her body position and highlights key things for the pupils to look at when they have a turn to perform in a few minutes' time. Gaynor and Derrick complete the task when they arrive at the other side of the court.

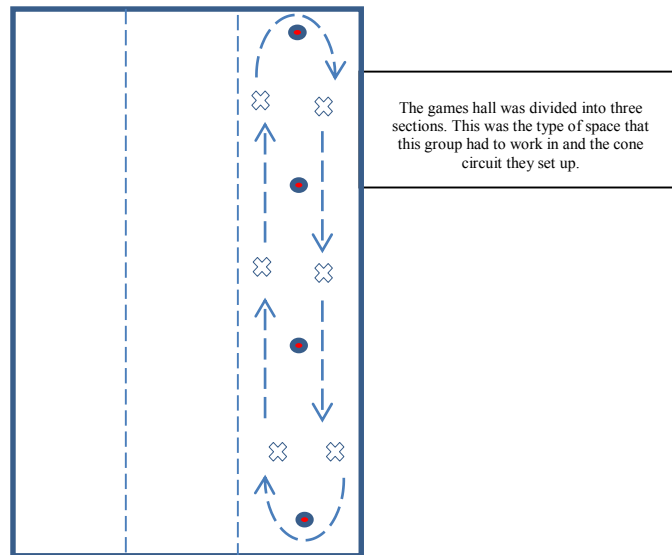
Once the task is complete, Gaynor asks: "Tell me something that I did with my arms"? The pupils respond to Gaynor and offer a few comments about her arm position that was pointing towards Derrick. Gaynor continues to add that "yes...it's almost giving me the distance I want to be from him...what was this one doing?" She refers to the hand extended to the side by nodding at her arm whilst briefly holding 'the shadow' position once more. A pupil responds and tells her it is closing off a way past her and she replies that "yeah I'm kind of saying you're not passing this side..." (Gaynor on 28/02/2013)

In the second excerpt, Seymour was working with an S3 athletics class. This example shows a more open-ended situation where the class had to share ideas and experiment to formulate a response to a situation set up by the teacher.

Seymour explains that the girls should "stay in the same [running] order" so that they can "practice handing over the [relay] baton" and "...aim to get this thing [the baton] round the track as fast as possible". He lets the girls know that it is "you guys [the three groups in class that have to]...first come up with a way of practising the relay change over in the space...running, recovery...taking-off...come up with a way to solve the problem...how you can organise the group and the space...solve the organisational problem" so you can change-over the baton at full speed. The pupils start to slowly get up off the floor.

There were many stifled discussions that started across all the groups whereby a pupil would try to suggest a possible answer, but then they either stop themselves half way through or someone else would point to a flaw in their idea. Seymour circulates round the class and listens to some of the discussions, but makes limited comments unless asked a direct question.

I decided to go and specifically join one of the groups. These pupils set up a long circuit of cones where they would run up one side doing change overs, pass round the cone at the top end and start to run down the other side (see below).



The pupils completed several practice runs where they could continually change over the relay baton. After practising for a few minutes the group stops and they start to slowly gather together.

Amber: “Did that work?” Another pupil, Redina, provides some comments for improvement.

Redina: “...it’s too short [points her hands to one side of the circuit then the other]...the distance at the ends is too short” to get back up to full speed for the change-over immediately after the bend. Seymour arrives at this group as the pupils are having this discussion. He listens to Redina’s explanation.

Seymour: “What do you have to do? [after listening to Redina explaining]”The pupils suggest a few things like having fewer people performing at a time and changing the layout of the cones.

Seymour: “[Seymour listens to these suggestions] So is it almost about giving people a bigger space to run?” Seymour moves off to another group positioned in the middle of the hall as the girls continue to share ideas.

Setting up both these more constrained and open-ended situations was part of teacher-guided practice and this framing category was common amongst all the participant teachers. In the first excerpt, we can see Gaynor using a demonstration to set up a more constrained situation. She used this demonstration as the basis for

asking the class some specific questions related to their work on marking an opposition player in a basketball game. In answering these questions, the pupils were simultaneously sharing information with the teacher and the rest of the class which displayed their understanding and could improve the performance of other pupils in class. In the second excerpt, Seymour set up what he referred to as a “problem” or a situation. The pupils were expected to formulate a response to this situation. Given the open-ended nature of the situation, the pupils spent an extended period sharing information and ideas by discussing and experimenting with the “problem” in their groups. Seymour spent time circulating around the class; sometimes he simply listened and moved off without any intervention and, at other times, he asked more questions for the pupils to consider.

4.3.3 Pupil-led practice: the pupils ‘taking on responsibility’

Pupil-led practice generally involved pupils ‘taking on responsibility’ for leading in a range of different ways during a class. The pupils were considered to be ‘leading’ in a class when they were designated by the teacher to be a leader or the teacher specifically requested that a pupil or group of pupils take charge for a section(s) of a lesson. Making this distinction allowed these leadership roles – designated and requested – to be recognised as actions relating to pupil-led practice as pupils were formally taking on responsibility in class. Taking on responsibility for the leadership of ‘self’ or others pupils in class included leading in a range of different ways:

- leading a self-evaluation task;
- leading a peer assessment task;
- one pupil leading a task with a small group;
- a small group leading a task with another small group;
- a small group leading a task with the rest of the class, and;
- one or two pupils leading a task with the whole class.

In general, the pupils were supported in their performance of these leadership roles in the following ways: the teacher presented information or resources to the class; the pupils recalled information from a previous lesson or series of lessons; the pupils had time to plan and prepare ideas in advance of a lesson. For instance, in conducting self-evaluation and peer assessment tasks, the teacher usually provided pupils with information via explanation, demonstration, and/or work sheets. The pupils used these resources to consider some key features of their own performance as self-evaluation and that of a partner or group as peer assessment. Leading a small group or the whole class involved pupils recalling ideas from previous lessons and instances where pupils had had an opportunity to plan and prepare information and ideas in advance of the class. Taking responsibility in all these different ways often involved pupils taking charge of organisational and administrative tasks such as setting up their own equipment, organising their peers, and documenting various pieces of information. For the most part, teachers provided support to the pupils taking on various forms of responsibility and, at times, this role demanded that the teacher had to respond to changing situations:

- by initially explaining what was expected and how a pupil(s) should take ahead their leadership role;
- by re-stating or refocusing a pupil who was leading when things were not quite going according to plan or if a practice was unsafe;
- by providing key features for comparison during self-evaluation and peer-assessment tasks and reviewing work planned by a pupil in advance of a lesson;
- by modelling how to lead others more effectively in terms of some of the more technical points such as positioning and providing feedback, and;
- by praising and encouraging the pupil(s) taking responsibility.

The recurring patterns associated with pupil-led practice are summarised in Figure 4-4:

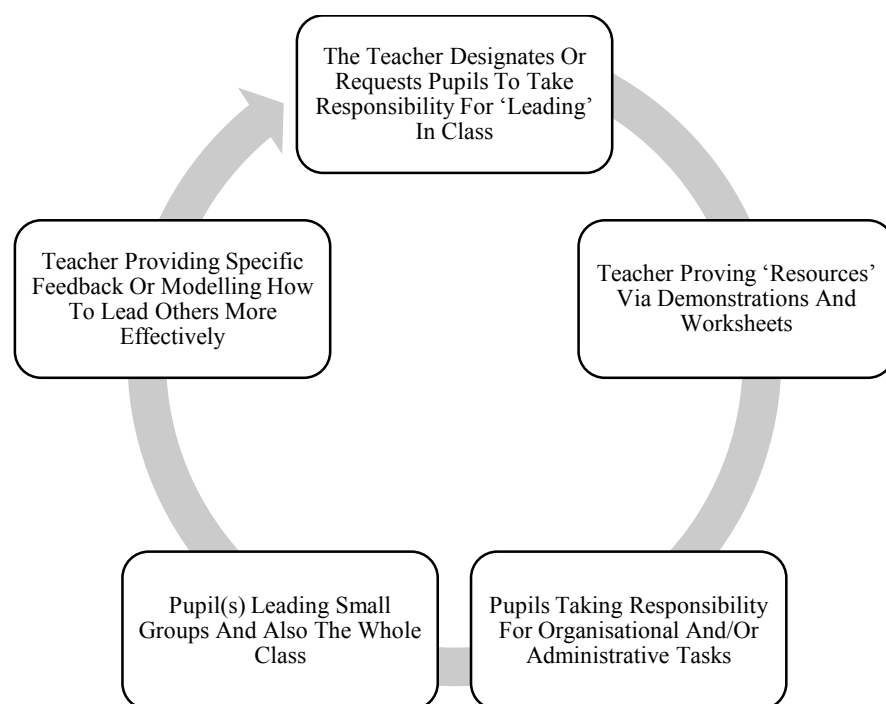


Figure 4-4: The Recurring Patterns of Pupil-Led Practice

In this section, I present three separate examples of pupil-led practice. Each example aims to illustrate a different way that pupils took responsibility in classes. The first uses an example from Stanley’s class where his S3 pupils took on a self-evaluation task:

Stanley: “Right...pick up your pen or pencil and sit against the wall here”. He points to the area where he would like the pupils to gather around some gymnastic equipment. He continues to add that “when you get to this station you get to choose a full turn or a half turn in the air...it’s a self-evaluation to assess yourself. Yes you can watch a partner and you can use video, but we’re not ready for that and will probably use video in a few weeks’ time. For full turn and half turn...think of the first two boxes to start”. These ‘boxes’ are part of a worksheet that Stanley has devised to help with this task. There are a series of boxes that set out the key features of the full and half turn. He asks the pupils: “Why not all of it [the boxes] at once?” One pupil is quick to tell Stanley that “it’s not possible” to consider all the key features at the same time.

Stanley: “Yeah how can you remember [all the key features] so you’ll have to break it down...take the first two boxes and...then...” take the next two boxes and record if you did or did not meet the criteria laid out on

the sheet. Any questions? There is silence from all pupils. (Stanley on 15/04/2013)

The second is an example from Erika's class where her S1 class undertook peer-assessment work:

Before the next round of shot putt throwing starts, the pupils who will be throwing in this round are asked to line up so their partners can assess their ready position. The pupils are already arranged into groups of three and have been shown a clear pupil demonstration of the shot putt throw. "Right ready position" is called out by Erika and these pupils all take up the crouched position at the throwing line. These pupils are not going to throw just yet, they are only holding their crouched ready position. Erika explains that "this time I want you to go and help your partner get into the position we talked about". At this point, the two other people in the group of three get to their feet quickly and move over to their partner who is holding this static ready position. The noise level in the class immediately rises. There is a lot of talking and a bit of laughing as the two pupils move round their partner.

As I look across the group as a whole some of these pupils stand back to see the performer from further away, some stand close and advise on the adjustments to make, and a few crouch down to see the lower body more closely. In other words, there are many approaches used to study their partner. Almost every pupil at some point physically manipulates their partner's body to a different position with some making large adjustments and others only slight changes. There is continual praise from Erika as the pupils work to assess their partner's body position. This process is repeated so that each pupil who is about to throw has their start position analysed by the other two pupils in their group. On the second and third occasion the reactions from the pupils are very similar: the noise level elevates; pupils take up various positions to observe; and there is some physical manipulation of their partner's position. (Erika on 26/04/2013)

The third example is drawn from Seymour's class where his S3 pupils took responsibility for leading a small group at the start of class:

Seymour: "Right let's get cracking...can I have two volunteers?" There are a few pupils in each group with their hands up in the air and Seymour works his way around the three groups and picks two people from each group to lead a warm up. He explains "what I want is [these people]...one person to warm up [the group and]...the other person to stretch [the group]...so warm up the squad...the other [person] stretch". The pupils get

steadily to their feet in their groups and then all three groups start to complete slightly different warm up activities: one group completes a follow the leader game where the selected pupil leads a single file line round the hall for a few seconds and then the leader demonstrates an exercise for the rest of the group to copy; the second group start at the bottom end of the hall and after an explanation from the selected pupil this group take it in turns to run out and back to a series of lines which are an increasing distance apart; the third group (led by a pupil called Brooke) simply run in a large, disorganised group to various places in the hall. The overall impression is that the first two groups are quite structured in the way in which they approached this leadership task; whereas the group led by Brooke is simply running to spaces in the hall until the group arrives at a wall and come to a standstill. Brooke would then look up and run into another space and the group would follow. After a period of time the groups start to gather in one place and a second pupil starts to demonstrate some mobility and static stretching exercises; the rest of the pupils in the groups copy these actions for a few minutes more.

Seymour: "Stop stretching and start to work flat out...do some fast stuff...try to get a bit more structure to it...think of working in an area...not quite Brooke style!" Brooke smiles at this comment and there is some more advice from Seymour for how the two pupils taking charge of this next task may be able to add more structure to the leadership task. (Seymour on 09/05/2013)

These examples illustrate some of the different ways that pupils were seen to take responsibility as part of pupil-led practice: 'leadership of self' where pupils work independently using self-evaluation tasks and 'leadership of others' where pupils use peer-assessment tasks and lead each another in small groups. In all three examples, pupils were designated or requested to take on a leadership role. Resources were provided for the self-evaluation task in the form of a work sheet and the pupils observed a demonstration to help them with the peer-assessment task. Additionally, the pupils leading in a small group were expected to recall some information and ideas from previous weeks' work. There is evidence in these examples of the supportive role of the teacher: Stanley, Erika and Seymour provided clear explanations and/or resources for the pupils taking on responsibility; Erika delivered much praise for the pupils as they worked to adjust their partner's body position; and Seymour suggested how the pupils could lead others more effectively in the next part of the warm up. Overall, my research

observations revealed that pupil-led practice was a way in which some participant teachers' worked with their classes.

4.3.4 Teacher-pupil negotiated practice: finding the 'middle ground'

Teacher-pupil negotiated practice generally involved the teacher and the pupils finding the 'middle ground' regarding the way ahead at various transition points in a lesson or series of lessons. These transition points could include: the start of a new unit of work; the start of a specific lesson; during a specific lesson; and at the end of a lesson or unit of work. In finding the middle ground, open discussion and debate helped to reach a compromise between the teacher and pupils. Most often, the teacher instigated these discussions and debates and, in the early stages of these exchanges, there was much use of explanation and questioning to start a form of dialogue with the pupils.

By initiating a class debate in this way before, during, or after a lesson or unit of work, the teacher could elicit responses and suggestions from the pupils. As part of this dialogue, there was an opportunity for the pupils to suggest future directions and the specific focus for class content. There were occasions where the teacher and the pupils generally agreed the lesson content and focus for a class. On other occasions, there could be a range of possible or even conflicting directions proposed by the pupils; this required the teacher to respond in some way to these diverse directions. After listening and then responding to various options proposed by the pupils, the teacher could explain some ideas or present possible options to the pupils. What makes this form of pupil choice different to categories such as teacher-guided practice is the way in which the options were based on the dialogue between the teacher and pupils. These options could be arranged in various ways:

- the options could be experienced sequentially in a short space of time so as to expose the pupils to several activities, ideas, or experiences;

- the options could be experienced sequentially with a longer period of time being spent on each one so that pupils can engage with at least one of their suggested activities, ideas, or experiences, and;
- the options could be experienced concurrently over a short or longer period so that the pupils had a choice of working independently or in groups across different activities, ideas, or experiences during a section of a lesson.

On some occasions, trying out various options in class might be a way for pupils to reflect on different experiences so they had an informed stance when it came to future dialogue with the teacher. In contrast to the overview provided for teacher-directed practice and even teacher-guided practice, there was scope for teachers to share the power for deciding what was said and what was done in class. The recurring patterns associated with teacher-pupil negotiated practice are presented in Figure 4-5.

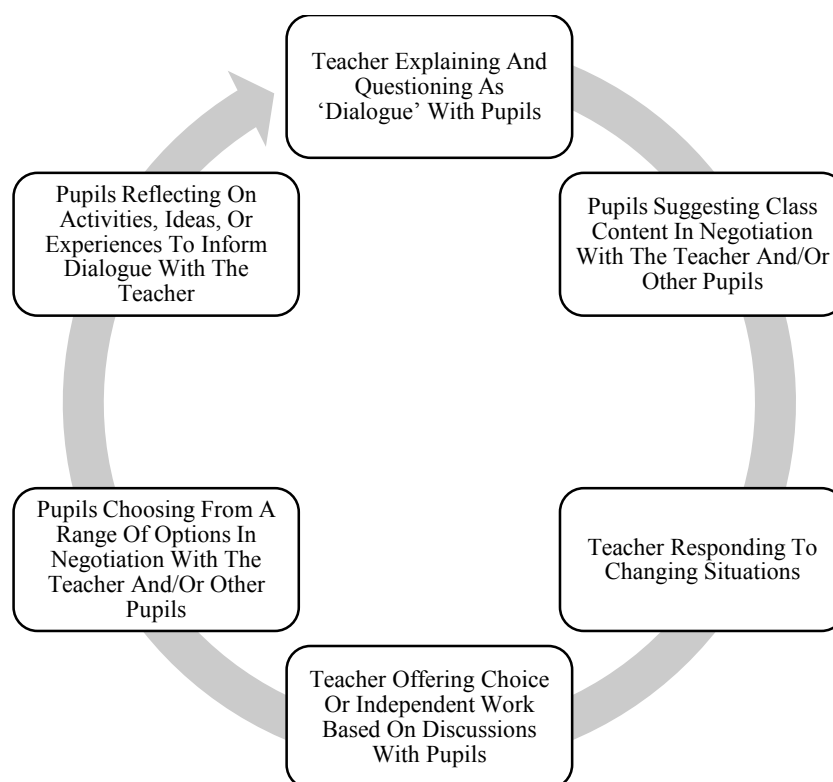
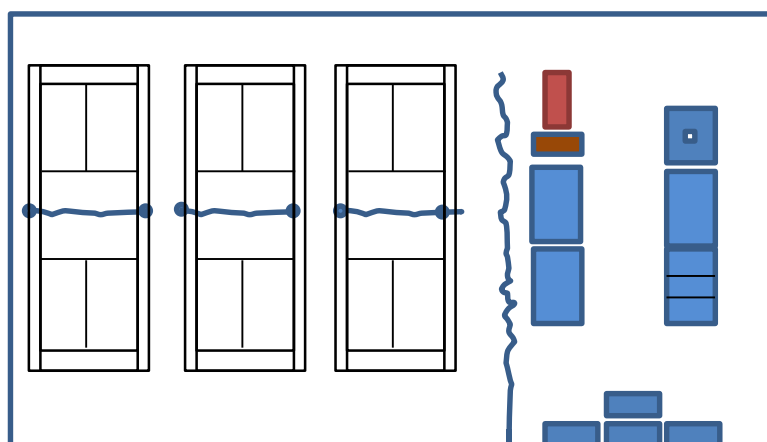


Figure 4-5: The Recurring Patterns of Teacher-Pupil Negotiated Practice

I use an extended extract from Gaynor's practice below to provide an example of teacher-pupil negotiated practice. Here Gaynor worked with an S3 class using badminton and gymnastics simultaneously in a lesson. I select exchanges from the beginning, the middle, and the end of this lesson to exemplify several of the recurring patterns associated with teacher-pupil negotiated practice. As this extract unfolds, note the way in which there is discussion and debate between teacher and pupils, the concurrent use of agreed options over the course of a few weeks, and the potential use of pupils' reflection to inform their dialogue with the teacher.

At the start of the lesson:

Within a minute or so, all the pupils are sitting on the games hall floor in front of Gaynor; she starts to complete a register and the girls are chattering as she goes. Gaynor reads a few names and then suddenly stops and asks for the girls to be quiet. A few more names are called out by Gaynor and the girls continue to chat loudly. "Wheesh!" The chattering girls start to settle down until the end of the register. Once the register is finished, Gaynor announces, "today we're going to work on badminton *and* gymnastics". The class worked in this way when they were in the department earlier in the week and they tried other activities as a taster experience. Gaynor continues explaining that they have tried a range of activities "...but by the end of today we should know what we're doing next time we're here...at the end [of the lesson] we'll discuss and decide as a class...so badminton stands out at the top end...and gymnastics out here." Gaynor shows where she would like this equipment to be set out by waving her arms to various areas of the games hall and adds that once this equipment is arranged a netted curtain can then be drawn across to divide these areas; I have included a diagram below to illustrate the way in which the equipment was arranged in the games hall:



In the middle of the lesson, I made the following fieldnotes:

The atmosphere in the class is relaxed. Gaynor continually moves around talking and watching then encouraging pupils to try perform the various skills they are already attempting in a more effective way. I am interested in the way in which Gaynor is not enforcing what, where, when, and how often the girls should be performing these skills. Yet, there is some form of activity happening across both sections of the hall and no-one is sitting out doing absolutely nothing. I just wonder what the class might be like if Gaynor were to take a different approach and was positioned in a more central role in what the girls were doing. What would the atmosphere and participation be like? Would the girls achieve more? Or, would there be many more pupils sitting out?

At the end of the lesson:

Gaynor is positioned at the entrance to the equipment cupboard and there is only the tall box to be put away and a gymnastics mat. Gaynor calls the girls over and they make their way towards her and gather tightly around the tall box. Gaynor leans on the box with her elbows and her forearms are resting on the top. Gaynor says “So girls we can stay with the same format next week for the Wednesday and the Friday....you suggested [earlier in the week] that you might be interested in dodgeball, basketball, and indoor rounders”. One pupil gasps loudly at the indoor rounders suggestion. Gaynor responds that it may be dodgeball that is the preferred option. Many of the girls respond with a “yeah” and this would be the preferred activity and one pupil offers a low level explanation as to why this is the case. The conversation continues back and forth for a few moments more and finishes with Gaynor offering a reminder that “Alright so dodgeball next Wednesday” and an indication that more negotiation may be ahead at the end of the next class as “we can see if we’ll keep that [dodgeball] for the Friday”.

Here we can infer that Gaynor has been working in a teacher-pupil negotiated way with this class in a previous lesson(s). For instance, there is reference to the previous lesson’s discussions and experiences and that both teacher and pupils are getting closer to knowing “what we’re doing next time we’re here”. This S3 class have recently finished an extended unit of creative dance and are at the start of a new unit of work. Gaynor has instigated a series of discussions and debates regarding the future directions for the class. A range of different directions had been proposed and, in the lesson featured above, Gaynor has organised these

options concurrently so the pupils can work in groups across two different activities. These and other experiences may be used in future dialogue with the teacher in the way that “we can see if we’ll keep that [dodgeball] for the Friday”.

Working in a teacher-pupil negotiated way was a part of some of the participant teachers’ practice. The example used above was one of the more extended ways in which a participant teacher displayed the actions that characterise teacher-pupil negotiated practice. I presented this example not to suggest that all teachers use teacher-pupil negotiated practice in this elaborate way, but rather to give the reader a more comprehensive overview of what this framing category may involve. There were, of course, many less elaborate ways that teachers operationalised teacher-pupil negotiated practice. I have already acknowledged times when the teacher and pupils quite readily agreed that an area of work needed attention in future sections of a lesson. In other words, the teacher and the pupils quickly achieved the middle ground. Hence, teacher-pupil negotiated practice could be used in a transient way; it could be used to identify a clear direction in collaboration with the pupils and then the teacher might use some of the related framing categories – such as teacher-directed practice, teacher-guided practice, and pupil-led practice – to advance this position.

4.3.5 Pupil-initiated practice: using and creating ‘improvised moments’

Pupil-initiated practice generally involved the teacher *using* and *creating* ‘improvised moments’ in a lesson. As key parts of pupil-initiated practice, I want to explain the difference between *using* and *creating* these ‘improvised moments’ in a lesson. Firstly, in terms of the teacher *using* improvised moments, this involved the way she or he can respond to, and be attentive of, changing situations in a lesson. These are the moments where a pupil or group of pupils asks a question, responds to a teacher’s question or statement, suggests something they would like to do or continue doing, or raises an idea that is picked up by the teacher and this forms a major focus of a lesson. In other words, these are the spontaneous, ad hoc moments where a suggestion emerges from a pupil(s) and

then the teacher allows this to influence the direction of the lesson. The recurring patterns associated with this form of pupil-initiated practice are presented in Figure 4-6.

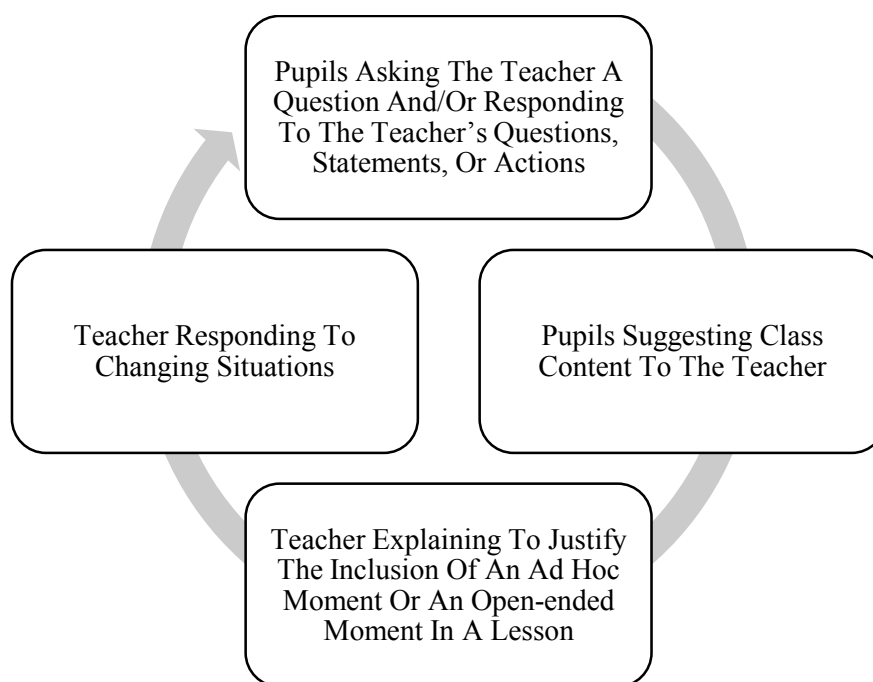


Figure 4-6: The Recurring Patterns of Pupil-Initiated Practice: Using Improvised Moments

Secondly, in terms of the teacher *creating* improvised moments these were the deliberate times where the teacher left the way ahead in a lesson completely open-ended for the pupils to decide on the next steps. In this way, the teacher had considered the use of these open-ended moments in advance of the lesson and was therefore creating a section in a lesson where there was a degree of uncertainty in relation to what could be taking place at this time. These open-ended situations were sometimes, but not always, accompanied with some tentative suggestions from the teacher. However, these tentative suggestions were more a frame of loose ideas for the pupils to consider, rather than options that must be selected and feature in the lesson. In comparison to the other four framing categories, the use and creation of improvised moments in a lesson as part of pupil-initiated practice was the point where ‘power’ and ‘control’ to decide what took place in a lesson

was transferred almost exclusively to the pupils. The recurring patterns associated with this form of pupil-initiated practice are presented in Figure 4-7.

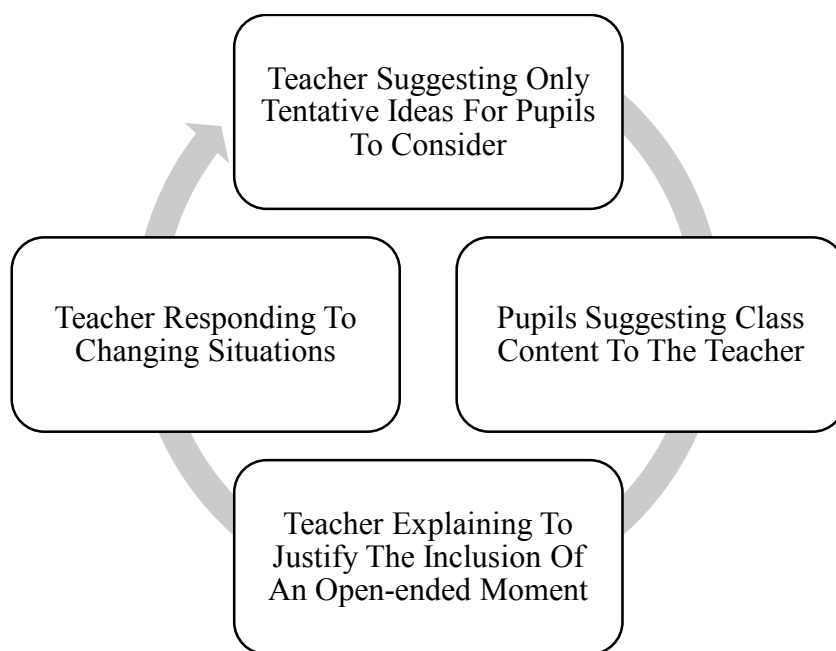
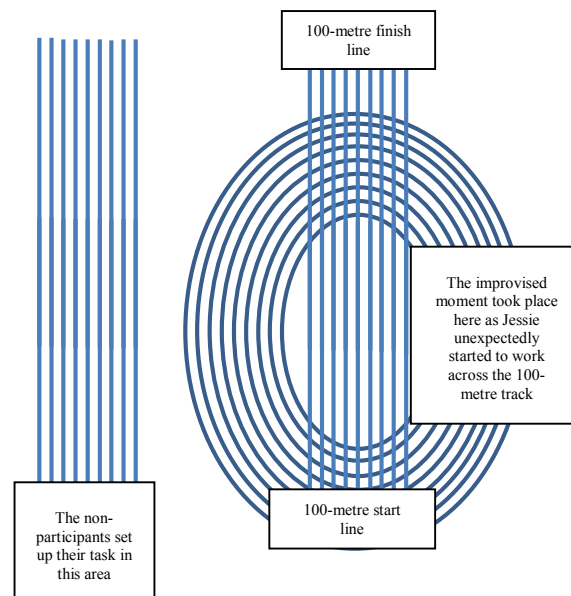


Figure 4-7: The Recurring Patterns of Pupil-Initiated Practice: Creating Improvised Moments

Both these improvised moments – those that are used and those that are created – may demand a degree of teacher explanation. For improvised moments used in a spontaneous way by the teacher, they often have to explain why these ideas have suddenly been incorporated into the lesson or to explain how they intend to move this idea forward. For those improvised moments that are created in a completely open-ended way by the teacher, there is usually a need to justify the nature of this section of a lesson and to sketch out some tentative possibilities for pupils to consider.

In the discussion that follows, I use two separate examples of pupil-initiated practice. The first example, using an observation of Jessie’s practice with an S3 class working on athletics, provides an illustration of the way she used an improvised moment that emerged from the pupils in the class.

I decided I would spend some time with the non-participant group who had set up a task and were leading this for their peers. I arrived to this group with Jessie and watched them working for several minutes. Jessie let me know that she was moving back over to the timed sprint group and explained that this group would be working to complete a few more 100 metre sprints in the remaining time left before the end of the period. I decide to stay with the non-participant group. My reason for staying with this group and not following Jessie was that I found it interesting that some non-participant pupils were taking such an active lead in the class. The diagram below sets out where I was positioned with the non-participants and the position where Jessie was moving to so she could work with the 100 metre sprint group:



As soon as Jessie arrived at these pupils, I could see she was working with some of the pupils on something other than the 100 metre sprint. These pupils completed no more timed 100 metre sprints. Instead, they were now working across the track over a shorter distance; I could see Jessie continually speaking to these pupils as they worked across the track. I quickly approached Jessie as she was working with this group. I was interested in that Jessie was not necessarily working with the pupils on what she intended to do only a few minutes previously i.e., more 100 metre sprints. As soon as I arrived, Jessie immediately came to chat with me as the pupils continued to work on their sprinting in the background. Jessie immediately informs me that, “the girls wanted to work a bit more on their starts and a bit more on their sprinting technique”. Jessie turns to the sprinters again. She follows them back and forth across the track and asks a few questions “...do you think you were using your arms here

Natalie...[Natalie and Jessie have a brief conversation]...we'll bring out the camera next time...". I asked Jessie more about the improvised nature of this incident just before the end of the lesson. She explained the girls requested this input from her after they had completed a few timed 100-metre sprints. The girls believed a quicker start and better technique would improve their overall performance. (Jessie on 28/05/2013)

The second example is an observation of Roddy's practice when he was working with an S1 fitness class. This illustrates an improvised moment Roddy considered in advance of a lesson and how he provided some tentative guidance for the pupils.

As the pupils are filing through the gate and onto the astro-turf pitch, one pupil turns to Roddy and shouts: "Run?" The pupil is asking if Roddy would like the class to start their warm up by running around the astro-turf pitch. The weather is bright and dry, but it is still cold. Roddy lets him know that he is first going to collect some equipment and then "I'll set the tone first" before the class complete a warm up. I walk into the equipment store to see if Roddy needs help carrying any of the equipment. Roddy and I meet at the door as he was only in the cupboard momentarily. All Roddy has in his hands is a small stack of lightweight cones. I immediately ask: "You needing anything else?" Roddy tells me "no this [the cones] should do as after the first challenge it's over to them to decide so who knows what we'll need [in terms of equipment]".

Roddy explains to the class that the first challenge will "put fitness to the test...to win this task we must be good at cooperation and planning". Roddy then explains "remember the winner gets to decide on the next activity, but Cameron make sure this is something sensible". A mini explanation from Roddy highlights some things that would not be possible or dangerous. After winning the challenge, a group of boys have a quick discussion and decide to play what they call "capture the flag". Roddy and one or two pupils from the winning group set out a playing area on half of the astro-turf pitch. Roddy instructs more pupils to collect two rugby balls, coloured bibs, and some additional pieces of equipment from the cupboard. It takes several minutes for this game to get underway. (Roddy on 21/03/2013)

These two examples provide an insight into the way in which pupil-initiated practice involved teachers using improvised moments in their lessons. In the first example, Jessie used a suggestion from a group of girls in the class and then responded by making sprint starts and sprint technique the focus of the lesson. The

ability to respond in this immediate way is a key part of pupil-initiated practice. In a similar way to teacher-pupil negotiated practice, teachers could make use of the spontaneous nature of pupil-initiated practice in transient ways. In other words, *using* improvised moments could inspire a major focus for a lesson and then the teacher might follow up on the new direction with framing categories like teacher-directed practice, teacher-guided practice, or pupil-led practice. In the second example, Roddy left a section of a lesson completely open-ended and up to the pupils to decide the way ahead. In leaving a section of a lesson uncertain in terms of what was going to take place Roddy also provided only a few tentative ideas of what would *not* be possible and left the pupils to decide within this broad frame. The creation of these improvised moments is the other key part of pupil-initiated practice.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has presented a theoretical framework that encapsulates the totality of ways in which the participant teachers were observed working with their classes. A key objective in this chapter was to set out an initial exemplification of the theoretical framework presented in Figure 4-1. Therefore, the opening section of the chapter provided a broad outline of this theoretical framework and the connections within and between its constituent parts. One main element of the theoretical framework – the five framing categories – represents the *different* classroom interactions captured during the observation phase of the research. The other main element – the ‘teacher-pupil power dynamic’ – encapsulates the power differential that existed in the classrooms that featured in this study. This power dynamic was centrally connected to understanding the shift from the teacher to the pupils as categories step from teacher-directed through to pupil-initiated practices. While two related dimensions of the ‘teacher-pupil power dynamic’ – ‘who decides’ and ‘what decides’ – acknowledge the scope for pupil agency to pattern classroom practice, teachers themselves often make sense of a wide range of factors that enabled and constrained their deployment of the five framing

categories. Chapters 5 and 6 of this thesis will discuss this ‘teacher-pupil power dynamic’ element in more detail.

The second section of this chapter explored the five framing categories, providing a comprehensive account of the distinct ways in which the participant teachers worked with their classes in this study. These categories can be summarised in the following ways:

- teacher-directed practice with the teacher ‘in charge’;
- pupil-guided practice with the teacher ‘setting up’ situations;
- pupil-led practice with the pupils ‘taking on responsibility’.
- teacher-pupil negotiated practice - finding the ‘middle ground’;
- pupil-initiated practice - using and creating ‘improvised moments’;

This overview has aimed to provide the reader with a clear picture of each framing category, and the key distinctions between them, together with insights into what the participant teachers were actually doing in their classes. Chapter 7 will return to discuss these distinct patterns of classroom interaction in more detail, highlighting the commonalities and contrasts with research on teachers’ practices reported in the physical education literature.

In the next chapter, I carry forward my discussion of the theoretical framework and I add a layer of complexity into the framing categories by considering teachers’ practice as varied, fine-tuned, responsive, and negotiated in nature.

Chapter 5 – The Varied and Flexible Nature of Participant Teachers’ Practices

5.1 Introduction

A theoretical framework was set out in the previous chapter to provide a comprehensive overview of the participant teachers’ practice. This framework, composed of five framing categories and a ‘teacher-pupil power dynamic’ element, captures and draws together the main findings from the observation and interview phases of the research. The main thrust of the previous chapter was to present clearly the five framing categories identified in this study as teacher-directed, teacher-guided, pupil-led, teacher-pupil negotiated, and pupil-initiated practice. A series of extensive extracts from observation fieldnotes exemplified these framing categories, providing a detailed account of how these five terms represent the patterns of classroom interactions performed by participant teachers.

The purpose of this present chapter is to add a layer of complexity to this account by presenting the varied nature of participant teachers’ practices alongside delineating the key features guiding the flexible deployment of these five framing categories. This chapter is structured into two main sections. The first section begins by addressing the variation captured *within* individual participant teacher’s practices. Analysis of observation data revealed that each participant teacher had a broad repertoire of teaching approaches spanning several of the framing categories comprising the theoretical framework. Thereafter, this section considers the variation in practices *across* the sample of participants, showing diversity in the breadth and composition of framing categories that featured in their teaching repertoires. Reporting the variation within and across participant teachers’ practices in this chapter challenges influential, preceding research that has tended to report practice in physical education settings as over-reliant on forms of ‘direct’ teaching.

The second, more extensive, section explores the ways in which three key features of practice enabled participant teachers to employ their teaching repertoire in flexible ways. The key features are the ‘fine-tuning’ of learning experiences in advance of lessons taking place; the ‘negotiation and control’ of learning intentions with pupils at the start of, and during, lessons; and ‘responsiveness’ during the immediate act of teaching to enable strategic adaptations to be made to their practice. These insights highlight how teachers and pupils simultaneously shape classroom practices, sketching out a more dynamic picture of classroom life in comparison to existing education and physical education literature. Presenting these key features – ‘fine-tuning’, ‘negotiation and control’, and ‘responsiveness’ – in this section turns the spotlight on the ‘teacher-pupil power dynamic’ element of the theoretical framework. More specifically, it provides a detailed account of how responsive, interactive forms of teaching were practised to orchestrate the asymmetric power arrangement depicted by the ‘who decides’ dimension of the theoretical framework.

While presenting this complex account of practice will enable a more nuanced picture of the theoretical framework to emerge, it creates a major challenge for the exemplification of findings throughout this chapter. There is a need to present a considerable number of findings while providing extracts from my observation work to evidence these claims for my readership. Adopting a similar strategy to the previous chapter, where extensive extracts were provided for each of the framing categories, could create a tedious task for a reader and diminish the impact of the unfolding narrative. It seemed appropriate therefore to make the following modifications for the current chapter: section one will present extracts from fewer participants and draw upon the insights gained from the pilot study to exemplify the varied nature of practice; section two will present shorter extracts to evidence the flexible nature of practice.

5.2 Participant Teachers Working in Varied Ways

This section presents findings to exemplify the participant teachers' practice as varied in nature, reporting that they were all capable of working in ways that spanned more than one of the framing categories. Drawing together these findings about individual participant's practices, a closing section will compare and contrast their actions to point out that there was also a degree of variation *across* these five teachers' practices.

5.2.1 *Tracing the variation within and across participant teachers' practice*

Looking first at Gaynor's practice, she was initially included in the sample of participants for the present study due to the teacher-guided and teacher-pupil negotiated qualities identified during the pilot study. However, reflecting on the following excerpt from Gaynor's class, where she worked with an S2 all-girl swimming class, it will be evident that she was also capable of working in a way consistent with an additional framing category:

Using teacher-directed practice to start a lesson:

Gaynor informs the class that today's lesson will work on water survival skills. She asks the girls to slip into the water and to make a circle: there is a lot of noise and excitement, and it takes a fair bit of time to get into a circle. Gaynor continually re-states what she expects the girls to be doing and the circle slowly starts to take shape at the shallow end. Gaynor explains she would like the class to run around in the circle in a clockwise direction as fast as they can. When she blasts the whistle, the pupils should instantly change their direction of travel. Gaynor uses more pronounced body language here: holding her ear when she asks them to listen and giving the 'thumbs up' sign to pupils doing well. The class move quickly round in the circle. On a sharp, loud blast of the whistle, the girls try to change direction and the 'current' they have created forces many of them in different directions. There are loud shrieks and screams from the girls as they battle against this 'current' and, eventually, the circle starts to move more smoothly in the opposite direction. The practice repeats a few more times. (Gaynor on 22/02/2013)

The preceding extract has shown Gaynor working with a class in a teacher-directed fashion. Taken together with data from the pilot study, which captured teacher-guided and teacher-pupil negotiated practices, confirms that three of the framing categories are part of her teaching repertoire (see Figure 5-1). Observation work in other participant teachers' classes recognised that their actions straddled a similar number of the framing categories. For example, Seymour – performing teacher-directed, teacher-guided, and pupil-led practices – and Roddy – performing teacher-directed, teacher-guided, and pupil-initiated practices – had a similar range of these framing categories in their teaching repertoire.

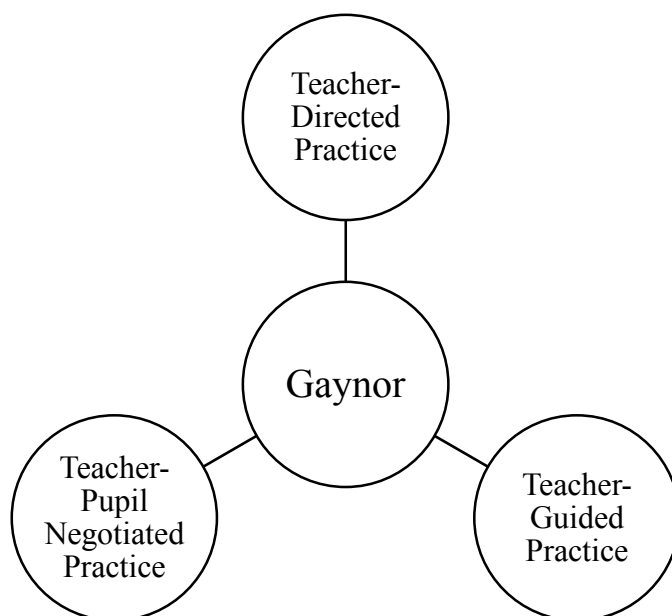


Figure 5-1: Gaynor's Practice Captured by the Framing Categories

Analysis of observation fieldnotes revealed some participant teachers employed a broader repertoire of approaches in comparison to those captured in Gaynor, Seymour, and Roddy's practice. Shifting to look at Stanley's practice, he was included in the current study due to key informants recognising his ability to work with classes in a teacher-directed and teacher-guided fashion. However, alongside these two modes of practice, observations of Stanley 'in action' with his classes revealed he was also capable of working in ways that reflected the pupil-led and pupil-initiated framing categories. The following extracts are from two different

lessons to provide examples of Stanley's practice from contrasting activities and across different stages of schooling. In the first extract, Stanley works in a pupil-led way at the start of an S2 mixed hockey class and, in the second extract, he prepares to work in a pupil-initiated way from the start of an S3 gymnastics class:

Using pupil-led practice at the start of an S2 hockey lesson:

Stanley gathers the pupils around him as soon as they arrive at the school's astro-turf pitch. He explains that the class will start this lesson by using the "same teams", the "same pitch" area, the "same rules", and the same "4 v 1 possession" game as last lesson. There was a reminder from Stanley that the class learned the "simple push pass" and "stopping the ball" last lesson. He asks two pupils in each team to first oversee the organisation of their team and, once these games are underway, these pupils should then observe the passing and stopping technique of the players in their team. The pupils selected to be 'in charge' rush over and collect equipment – from the bag of sticks, bucket of balls, and stack of cones – and then these pupils and their team-mates move to various areas of the pitch. (Stanley on 07/03/2013)

Using pupil-initiated practice from the outset of an S3 gymnastics lesson:

As Stanley and I get nearer to the gym hall, I was keen to ask, "What's the plan for today?" Stanley provides a mini overview of the content covered with this class over the past few weeks: "We've done self-assessment...and peer assessment...today's more about them". Once the class arrive and the equipment – a selection of trampets, springboards, vaulting boxes, and padded mats – is arranged in the hall, Stanley explains the "focus" of the lesson to the pupils. He says, "the focus is different for everyone today...it's about skill development...for some it might be [Stanley mentions one possibility could be improving the skills learned in previous weeks]...for others it might be trying something new...you have to have your own focus today...it's not about aimlessly jumping over trampets...you have to define it [the lesson focus] for yourself. Let's go". (Stanley on 29/04/2013)

Working in pupil-led and pupil-initiated ways, as exemplified in the preceding extracts, is evidence that Stanley can perform effectively across more than one framing category. Drawing this evidence together with observation data capturing teacher-directed and teacher-guided practices, confirms the breadth of his teaching

repertoire (see Figure 5-2). Observation work recognised that Erika’s practice, as captured by the theoretical framework, involved performing a similar number of framing categories, which included teacher-directed, teacher-guided, teacher-pupil negotiated, and pupil-led practices.

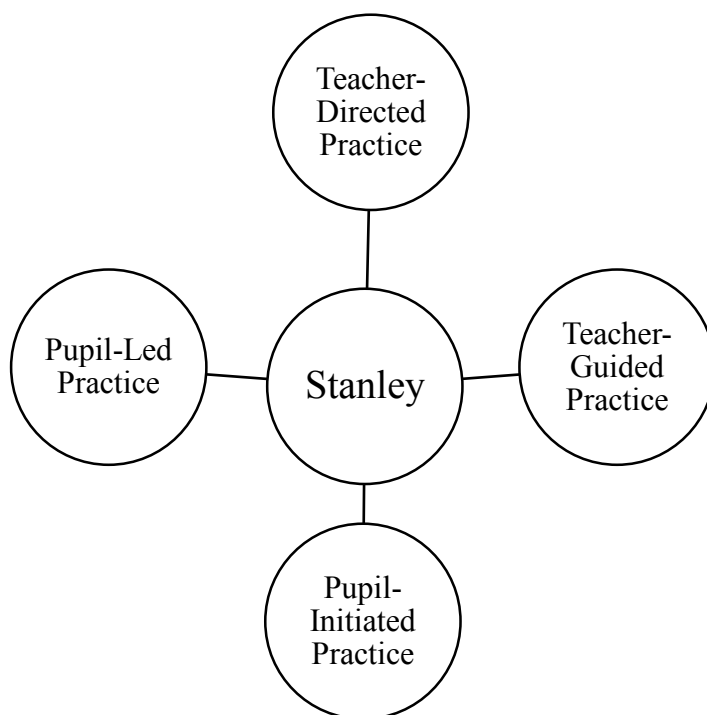


Figure 5-2: Stanley’s Practice Captured by the Framing Categories

A final example of the varied nature of participant teachers’ practice is presented from an observation of Jessie ‘in action’ with a class. Jessie, the teacher with the broadest repertoire of approaches in this study, performed teaching actions that corresponded with all five framing categories comprising the theoretical framework. The following extract is from Jessie’s practice as she works with an S3 class on athletics and, as this extract unfolds, note the way in which her actions represent all five framing categories within the same lesson:

Starting the lesson off with pupil-led practice:

As a warm up, Jessie asks one pupil, Sharlene, to lead the warm up. The class work between two lines which are about five metres apart; Sharlene explains and leads various movements and the class complete several tasks – skipping, high knees, side stepping, lunging, stretching – between these two lines.

Moving the lesson on with teacher-directed and then teacher-guided practice:

Jessie stops the warm-up that Sharlene has been leading; the pupils gather round her. Jessie explains “Right sprints...starts...rolling start...a short sprint to here”. Jessie wants this sprinting task to work in the same area that Sharlene used for the warm-up task, but has extended this to cover a 20-metre distance. She lets the pupils know that it is “to this line here” and that the pupils should “get faster and faster” as they get closer to that line. The pupils stretch out along the start line. Jessie calls out “Go” each time to start these sprints. The pupils complete several sprints and walk back to the start position again. Jessie stops the class and they stand along this starting line. She asks “Sprint start...can I get some coaching points from what you have read” on the sheets provided earlier? There is an extended question and answer session followed by some sprint/sprint start developments.

Moving the lesson on in different directions with teacher-pupil negotiation:

Jessie explains that there will be an opportunity to be timed over 100-metres. There is a show of hands for those pupils who want to be timed and an extended discussion about the alternative options available for those choosing not to be timed over 100-metres. Jessie explains, “...nine of you that don’t want to be timed over here” and she sends these pupils to the area set out by the non-participants and “...you folks [the remaining four or five that want to be timed] carry on with the [sprint] starting”.

Managing an unexpected turn with pupil-initiated practice¹⁵:

As soon as Jessie arrived at these pupils, I could see she was working with some of the pupils on something other than the 100-metre sprint. These pupils completed no more timed 100-metre sprints. Instead, they were now working across the track over a shorter distance. I could see Jessie continually speaking to these pupils as they worked across the track. I quickly approached Jessie as she was working with this group. I was interested in that Jessie was not necessarily working with the pupils on what she intended to do only a few minutes previously, i.e., more 100 metre sprints. As soon as I arrived, Jessie immediately came to chat with me as the pupils continued to work on their sprinting in the background. Jessie immediately informs me that, “the girls wanted to work a bit more

¹⁵ While this extract featured earlier in this thesis, here it is serving a different purpose.

on their starts and a bit more on their sprinting technique”. (Jessie on 28/05/2013)

While the preceding extract only provides a brief summary of several episodes from the same lesson, it reveals clear distinctions between the different ways that Jessie interacted with the class. For instance, Sharlene was designated to be a leader of the warm up and this corresponds with pupil-led practice. The lesson moved on in a teacher-directed way with Jessie specifically telling pupils how, where, and when to complete some sprinting activity. Jessie asked questions regarding the technique for a sprint start and, with the pupils sharing information and ideas, these actions align with teacher-guided practice. The lesson moved on in different directions with a form of teacher-pupil negotiated practice; and there was an unexpected turn and pupil-initiated practice was evident when the pupils suggested some class content to pursue in the remainder of the lesson. With Jessie performing all five framing categories in the preceding excerpts, this displays that she had the broadest teaching repertoire in comparison to other participants involved in this study (see Figure 5-3).

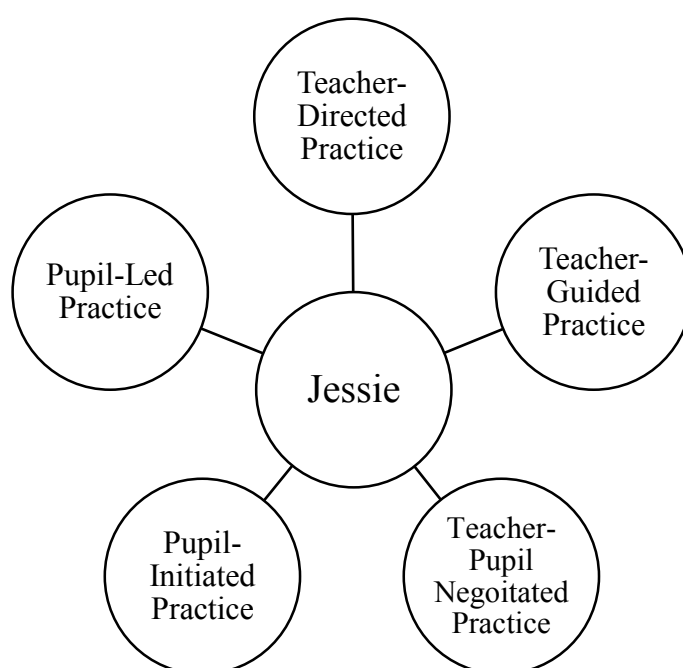


Figure 5-3: Jessie’s Practice Captured by the Framing Categories

Thus far, preceding paragraphs have presented the variation that was captured within each participant teacher's practice, showing how a broad repertoire of teaching approaches was employed to interact with the pupils in their classes. However, reviewing the breadth and composition of the framing categories employed by participants across this sample, reveals there was also much variation between these teachers' practices. In terms of the breadth of framing categories employed across the sample, the above extracts highlight that three participants performed three of framing categories (Gaynor, Roddy, Seymour), two participants performed four of the framing categories (Stanley and Erika), and only one participant performed all five of the framing categories (Jessie). Therefore, while all the teachers were working across more than one framing category, Stanley, Erika and Jessie had broader teaching repertoires than Gaynor, Roddy, and Seymour.

It will be evident from the extracts presented earlier that teacher-directed and teacher guided work were part of all participant teachers' practices. The previous chapter has already explained that these two modes of practice involve the teacher very largely controlling classroom situations. However, with all participant teachers performing at least one of the three remaining framing categories, this provided opportunities for the pupils to take an active role in classroom situations by virtue of pupil-led, teacher-pupil negotiated and pupil-initiated practices. Reviewing the extent to which the teachers performed these three framing categories – pupil-led, teacher-pupil negotiated and pupil-initiated practices – reveals a degree of diversity across this sample of participants.

Firstly, the participants performing three of framing categories all employed teacher-directed and teacher-guided practices with their classes, but the third category featuring in each teacher's repertoire was different: Gaynor included teacher-pupil negotiated practice; Roddy included pupil-initiated practice; Seymour included pupil-led-practice. Secondly, both participants performing four of the framing categories included teacher-directed, teacher-guided, and pupil-led practices, but the main difference was that Stanley incorporated pupil-initiated

practice and Erika teacher-pupil negotiated practice. Finally, it has been noted that Jessie was the only teacher who performed across all five framing categories. Therefore, over and above the commonalities of teacher-directed and teacher-guided practices, it is striking to note that no participants in this study had an identical teaching repertoire.

Having observed variation in the deployment of these framing categories, informal conversations with participant teachers explored this finding in more detail. The following conversation with Roddy expressed a view shared across the participants in this study. Roddy's comments confirmed the variation in his practice as an essential requirement connected to the notion that a 'good' lesson should include a variety of teaching approaches:

Roddy: I've never been personally part of a lesson that's just been one [teaching approach], there's always been a mixture...pretty much every lesson I've been involved in...and maybe not even trying [to have a mixture], just you have to, if you want to get the best out of that class...

This quotation supports the claim that participant teachers perceived the variation in their classroom interactions as part of 'good' teaching practice. In particular, note the way in which Roddy links 'good' teaching and the variety in his practice back to meeting the needs and being alert to the abilities of the pupils. Therefore, the varied nature of practice, and the emphasis on sensitively tailoring these practices to meet the specific requirements of their classes, provides initial insights into *why* participant teachers employed a broad teaching repertoire. The next chapter of this thesis explores further the notion of teacher-pupil relationships, identifying the core factors shaping these relations and their effects on the decisions these teachers made about classroom practice.

5.2.2 Section summary

This section has demonstrated that participant teachers worked in varied ways with their classes. Analysis of observation fieldnotes revealed that there was

variation within each participant teacher's practice as they were all capable of interacting with classes in ways that spanned more than one of the five framing categories. Informal conversations with participant teachers about their practice confirmed that varying the patterns of interactions in classes was part of a 'good' lesson, largely driven by their desire to meet the needs and abilities of the pupils. Additionally, there was a degree of variation when comparing and contrasting the breadth and composition of the participants' practices. One striking observation was that none of the participants had an identical teaching repertoire, which highlights the diversity of teaching practices between the teachers taking part in this study.

5.3 Employing the Teaching Repertoire in Flexible Ways

Having established the varied nature of participant teachers' practices, this section reports the key features that appeared to guide the flexible deployment of these teaching repertoires. Subsequent sections present the 'fine-tuned', 'negotiated' and 'responsive' key features that were captured during observation work and are encapsulated within the 'who decides' dimension of the theoretical framework. It seems important to highlight at this stage that there are connections between the 'fine-tuned' feature presented in the immediately following paragraphs and the 'responsive' feature discussed in a later section of this chapter. The 'fine-tuning' of lessons is clearly a form of 'responsive' practice, but it was important to separate these ideas in the following ways for conceptual clarity. The terms 'fine-tuned' or 'fine-tuning' relate to the participant teachers' efforts to envisage appropriate practice *before* a lesson and *between* lessons taking place; the terms 'responsive' or 'responsiveness' are reserved for the capabilities of participant teachers to make decisions about, and changes to, their practice in the *immediate act* of teaching.

5.3.1 *'Fine-tuning' practice in advance of lessons taking place*

Starting with the 'fine-tuned' nature of practice, analysis of observation data revealed that all participant teachers carefully considered their practice in advance of lessons taking place. Indeed, 'fine-tuning' involved this group of teachers being able to think ahead and know what were appropriate learning experiences and modes of practice for a class or a smaller sub-group of pupils. The following extracts, taken from a visit to observe Gaynor working with an S3 all-girl class in the *first* lesson of an athletics unit, exemplify this fine-tuned feature of practice. In particular, note the way in which Gaynor first explained to me that the class would be pursuing "alternative athletics" and then confided in the girls that she was already aware that most of them are "not interested" in formal athletics events:

As I arrived:

I arrived at Mayfly High School just before the bell for first period. Gaynor and I chatted briefly as the bell sounded and the pupils started to arrive into the department. I ask what her plans are for today's class. Gaynor lets me know that, "We're supposed to be on athletics [the first lesson of the unit, but]...we're doing alternative athletics... modify a lot of the events [each week]...include a lot of fun events...so these [Gaynor has a box filled with some equipment tucked under one arm and picks up a skipping rope] are for skipping races and these [she holds up a 'vortex' ball] to throw like a javelin".

Gaynor introducing the lesson:

Gaynor and I make our way with the class onto the school's athletics track. The girls gather close to Gaynor and in a tight group. "We're on athletics" she explains, and "...I know some of you are not interested in doing things like 1500 metres and getting timed...we'll have fun races...skipping races...power walk races...three-legged races...throw the vortex balls instead of javelins...and over the weeks there will be a chance for people who want to run a race and get timed still to do that". (Gaynor on 03/05/2013)

Reflecting on this extract, consider the ways in which the first week of an athletics unit could have been completely different in terms of the proposed learning experiences and the content covered in the lesson. These S3 girls, (approaching

16-years-old), were doing three-legged races in this lesson, which may not be viewed as providing worthwhile or relevant experiences for pupils at this stage of secondary school. However, further excerpts from this “alternative athletics” lesson suggest that Gaynor was successful in gauging appropriate learning experiences for this particular class. The fieldnotes depict a teacher-guided approach to the “three-legged race” where there was “continual action” from the girls, an elevated “noise level”, and a persistent search by each pair to find “new ways” of performing the three-legged race efficiently. Therefore, one could argue these are indicators that the learning tasks and the teacher-guided approach pursued by Gaynor did indeed stimulate the S3 girls, providing a clear illustration of a participant teacher’s efforts to fine-tune their practice.

The preceding excerpts from observations of Gaynor’s practice allow one to infer that participant teachers could envisage appropriate learning experiences and practices for specific classes at the start of a series of lessons. In other words, Gaynor’s example suggests that she was already well aware that these pupils would need an “alternative” experience even though this was the first week of an athletics unit. However, the ‘fine-tuning’ of lessons was also an on-going, iterative process and involved all participant teachers thinking about their practice and making adaptations between lessons taking place. The following informal conversation with Seymour as he reflects on his efforts to fine-tune lessons over a number of weeks evidences this claim:

I really didn’t enjoy the class when I first got them...I thought it was going to be a difficult year...I think what I was doing [in terms of the teaching approaches used with this class] was a bit ‘old school’...I tried to get them [the pupils] more involved...take more responsibility...I think the ‘tapestry’ stuff we’ve been doing” at staff professional development sessions and after attending “a presentation from that document...‘Better Behaviour, Better Learning’...I just thought that’s what I need to be doing...[with this S2 all-girl class]”.

In this quotation, observe the way in which Seymour initially thought it would be a “difficult year” with this S2 class, but he implies there was an on-going commitment to fine-tuning his practice. While the participant teachers’ efforts to

fine-tune practice often involved relying on existing ways of working, Seymour's comments show how he was prepared to further expand his teaching repertoire. For instance, Seymour points out that he had a range of teaching approaches, but for this particular class he perceived there was a need to incorporate new ways of working into his existing practices. This expansion to his teaching repertoire, which appeared to involve interacting with the class in a pupil-led fashion, suggests he was willing to explore new ideas and make changes to his practice.

5.3.1.1 Section summary

This section has presented findings to exemplify the fine-tuned nature of participant teachers' practices. As summarised in Figure 5-4, the participants appeared to be able to envisage appropriate practice before a series of lessons and between lessons taking place, making necessary adaptations to learning intentions and ways of working with classes. Rather than routinely implementing their repertoire of teaching approaches, this group of teachers displayed a flexibility in their response by tailoring their practice to the specific requirements of their classes.

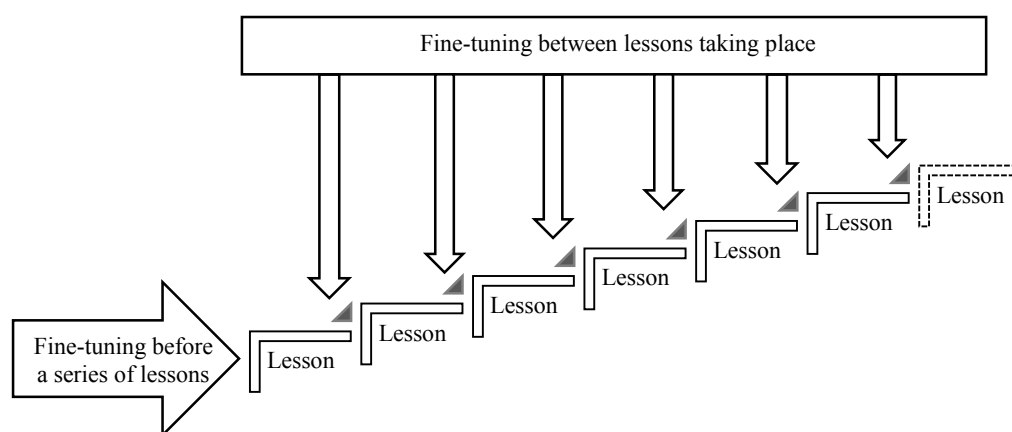


Figure 5-4: The 'Fine-tuned' Nature of Participant Teachers' Practices

Before examining the responsive nature of practice, which is interlinked with the fine-tuning of lessons, it is first important to explore 'negotiation and control' in

the next section. Focusing attention on the negotiation and control of learning intentions at the start of, and during, lessons should provide valuable insights into the dynamic exchanges that took place between teachers and pupils, showing a further demand for these teachers to be responsive in the immediate act of teaching.

5.3.2 Negotiation and control of learning intentions in the classroom

Shifting attention to the ‘negotiation and control’ that took place between teachers and pupils in this study, there were often explicit learning intentions that a teacher sets out to achieve during a lesson or series of lessons. While the presentation of these learning intentions differed within and between the participants in this study, all teachers regularly communicated these aspirations to the pupils at the start of lessons.

The following extracts from observations of Jessie and Roddy are representative examples of the two main ways in which the participant teachers in this study tended to present learning intention to pupils:

Roddy presenting learning intentions to pupils:

The S1 pupils arrive at the gym hall and Roddy asks them to sit in front of him. He explains the class are starting a table tennis unit and “the learning intentions for today are that we will learn how to serve in table tennis...we will be able to...assess what a ‘good’ serve should look like...it sounds like a lot but it isn’t really”. (Roddy on 19/02/13)

Jessie presenting learning intentions to pupils:

The S3 pupils begin to arrive into the gym hall. Jessie asks them to have a look at information on the whiteboard. She directs the pupils to a task about tactics in football written in red ink and the learning intentions in green ink. The following questions are on the board in red ink for pupils to discuss in pairs: What is a tactic? What is width in attack? What is depth in attack?

The following learning intentions are on the board in green ink:

“Learning Intention 1 –To develop basic tactical awareness...and adapt play”

‘Learning Intention 2 – Listen to others...and contribute to team decisions...’

When Jessie comes to discuss the learning intentions a few minutes later, she asks questions about what the term ‘tactics’ actually means, clarifies the connections between these two learning intentions, and explains how the class will develop tactics in today’s lesson. (Jessie on 10/09/13)

These extracts were typical of the participant teachers’ practices in the sense that they all presented learning intentions and shared these with pupils at the start of lessons. For example, while the presentation of these learning intentions differed – Roddy presented his intentions verbally and Jessie displayed her intentions on a whiteboard – both these teachers had clear learning goals to achieve and shared these with the pupils in the opening stages of the lesson.

While this study recognised the purposeful nature of these teachers’ practices, and similarities in sharing the learning intentions with the pupils, this section will demonstrate that achieving these aspirations was more challenging than initial impressions might suggest. Close analysis of observation fieldnotes revealed these teachers employed a number of negotiation strategies to get the pupils to ‘buy in’ to these learning intentions during lessons. For instance, the strategies identified in this study as ‘persuasion’ and using ‘incentives’ appeared to be employed to establish a ‘common’ perspective on learning intentions, which is very largely on a teacher’s terms in relation to what he or she wanted to achieve in a lesson. In other words, a teacher’s presentation of learning intentions at the *start* of lessons was often accompanied with forms of persuasion and incentives to get the pupils ‘on board’ with his or her aspirations for the class.

The following section will briefly present these two strategies in turn, demonstrating how this group of teachers incorporated these into their practice.

5.3.2.1 *Persuasion and incentives: establishing learning intentions*

Looking first at the participant teachers' use of persuasion, this generally involved them drawing upon a range of related ploys in an effort to claim that the learning intentions for a lesson are in the pupils' 'best' interests. These ploys involved the following range of options:

- the teacher telling the class a professional experience or life experience;
- the teacher using illustrations and stories;
- the teacher drawing on 'facts' and other forms of 'evidence';
- the teacher using humour or a highly enthusiastic outlook with the pupils.

In the following extract, Jessie prepares to work with an S1 mixed class on swimming. As this extract unfolds, consider the way in which Jessie, (in common with Seymour, Roddy, Stanley, and Gaynor), relies upon persuasion, in this case drawing on her professional experiences, to justify the learning intentions and ways of working in this lesson:

The pupils arrive into the department and start to sit on benches placed along the side of the corridor immediately in front of a white board. Jessie informs me that "it's swimming today" and she always gets the pupils to "meet here for the [start of the] first lesson". Invicta High School has its own swimming pool on site: a modern 20-metre pool. After a brief discussion about the "learning intentions" for today's lesson, Jessie explains the way in which she will be teaching the class today: "OK...I've had a few frights in my experience so I tend to be quite strict [for the first lesson]...people who said they can tread water [in Jessie's classes over the years]...later found out that they couldn't [tread water or swim]." (Jessie on 22/10/2013).

In this extract, Jessie makes explicit links to some of her professional experiences from the past where she admitted to having "frights" with pupils in the swimming pool. We can infer here that there may have been times in the past where Jessie has relied on the pupils to interpret their own swimming ability and these situations have been problematic. To avoid the moments where pupils might get into difficulties in the water, Jessie used these professional experiences to

persuade pupils that working in a “quite strict” fashion was a necessary step for the first lesson.

Moving on to consider participant teachers’ use of incentives, this tended to involve finding ways to motivate extrinsically the pupils to get them to comply with the learning intentions for a lesson. Most often, the teacher discussed any incentive(s) with the pupils at the outset of a lesson, but to access the incentive, the pupils first needed to carry out specific tasks or activities related to the learning intentions. A particular feature of this negotiation strategy, as identified in the practices of Gaynor, Seymour, Stanley, and Erika, was the fact that the participant teacher determined what the incentive might be and proposed this option to the class. The following series of extracts is from an observation of Gaynor’s practice as she works with an S2 all-boy class on athletics. These examples illustrate the way in which Gaynor employed an incentive to get the pupils on-board with her goals and learning intentions for an athletics lesson, which involved the re-testing of two separate running events:

Arriving in the department before the lesson started

Paul: “What’s planned for today?”

Gaynor: “Athletics...re-test the 100 metres...plus [Gaynor puts her hand up to her face to shield her mouth from the passing pupils and talks quietly] a 400 [metres] but they [the pupils] don’t know that yet...I’ll take a football out.”

Getting the lesson started:

Gaynor stands in front of the class and explains, “What I have planned for today...to get through...re-test the 100 metre sprint”. There is an explanation that there will be a chance to play small-sided football games at the end of the lesson if the class work well. Gaynor waits for a few seconds to ensure all the pupils are quiet and she adds, “...not only do I want to re-test the 100 [metres], but I also want to re-test the 400 metres as well.”

Towards the end of the lesson:

I asked Gaynor about her decision to offer some small-sided football games during this athletics lesson and she confirmed the following details: “I just started the football thing” as an “incentive” and she will continue to be flexible during next week’s athletics lesson where the class will complete the 800-metre event. (Gaynor on 30/05/2013)

This extract demonstrates how Gaynor used an incentive to establish the learning intentions with a class. Consistent with how the participant teachers in this study used incentives to establish learning intentions, consider the way in which Gaynor has already decided in advance that football will be the incentive, but to access this option the boys must first perform a re-test of the 100-metre and the 400-metre running events.

Thus far, preceding paragraphs have outlined the ways in which participant teachers employed persuasion and incentives to frame learning intentions in the opening stages of lessons. However, as documented in observation fieldnotes, the clear presentation of learning intentions, even with the support of persuasion and incentives, was not always enough for the pupils to accept and then work actively to achieve these aspirations in a lesson. When initial efforts were unsuccessful in getting pupils to ‘buy-in’ to the learning intentions the strategies of ‘asserting authority’ and ‘moral appeals’ tended to be used by teachers *during* lessons.

The next section will provide a brief outline of these two strategies, showing how participant teachers’ deployed these with their classes.

5.3.2.2 Asserting authority and moral appeals: maintaining learning intentions

Starting with asserting authority, this generally involved participant teachers directly confronting a pupil(s) and using an animated voice, (raising the voice above that of their usual conversational tone). This was accompanied by a change in body language – moving into close proximity with a pupil(s) and holding a fixed gaze. Most often, an animated voice and body language were sufficient to maintain the learning intentions for a lesson by encouraging pupils to act in a

particular way in class. On occasions where these assertive actions were less effective, the participant teachers often accompanied these exchanges with references to official school sanctions or the ‘rules’ of the school and physical education department.

In the following extract, Jessie works with an S3 mixed class in a hockey lesson. This is the penultimate lesson of the hockey unit and Jessie’s learning intentions were related to the pupils practising how to beat opposition players in game situations. However, as this extract unfolds, note the way in which Jessie was keen to move into game situations, but had to assert her authority when the pupils failed to follow a clear set of instructions:

The class are asked to stop a warm up practice and Jessie explains, “...into your teams and stand at the goal line”. This request takes a long time, maybe three minutes or more. Even when the pupils are finally arranged in a line, there is a lot of talking, calling out, pushing, and laughing. After a few “can we” do this and “can we” do that requests from Jessie, she raises her voice and lets the class know that “I’m not doing anything ‘til you’re quiet and if you’re not quiet we’re going inside”. There is an immediate silence over the class. Jessie continues her explanation about beating players in the games, but there are more interruptions. Jessie moves closer to one pupil and lets her know, “If you do that again I’m going to give you a punishment exercise”. The pupils stand quietly and Jessie continues.
(Jessie on 24/09/2013)

Asserting authority in a lesson, as exemplified in the preceding extract, was a strategy common amongst all the participant teachers. This extract illustrates how Jessie used animated body language and her voice when the class was not managing to follow a simple set of instructions related to the learning intention for the lesson. When this conduct continued, Jessie made use of the official school and departmental sanctions with the possibilities of ceasing the lesson by “going inside” and of one pupil receiving “a punishment exercise”.

Turning to discuss the moral appeals observed in classes, this strategy commonly involved participant teachers referring to the ‘better’ nature of the pupils and drawing attention to how they could or should work towards the learning

intentions in a lesson. These appeals regularly involved the participant teachers pointing out that the pupils already knew the learning intentions and associated tasks for the lesson, but had ‘let themselves down’ by not actively pursuing these goals. Therefore, the participant teachers regularly clarified how they expected the pupils to work towards these learning goals using a steady and conversational tone of voice.

The excerpt presented below is from Roddy’s lesson with an S2 all-boy class working on athletics. Sprinting was the focus of this lesson and the learning intentions explicitly involved the boys working cooperatively in small groups to record their fastest time over 100-metres. While several pupils sprinted down the track at the same time, Roddy had previously emphasised the non-competitive nature of this task:

As Martin crossed the finish line after a sprint, he throws himself onto the track and repeatedly thumps the ground with his fist. In a steady tone Roddy asks, “Martin can you come here please”? Martin slowly picks himself up off the ground and walks towards Roddy. Roddy asks, “Who did I say you were racing today? [Martin answers and Roddy continues]...Exactly, it’s not about what other people are doing... again it was your reaction...hitting the ground...it lets you down ...it was as long as you try your best...no matter what position [you crossed the finishing line]”. Roddy continues offering advice to Martin in relation to how he should perform class activities for the rest of the lesson. (Roddy on 07/05/2013)

Consonant with the actions of all participants in this study, this extract exemplifies the way in which these teachers made moral appeals to a pupil or group of pupils when there was a possibility that the learning intentions might not be realised during a lesson.

To recap, this section and the immediately preceding one have argued that the participant teachers employed a range of strategies to negotiate and control learning intentions at the start of, and during, lessons. These strategies – persuasion, incentives, asserting authority, and moral appeals – appeared to advance a ‘common’ perspective of the learning intentions, which was chiefly on

a teacher's terms in relation to what she or he wanted to achieve during lessons. Contrastingly, participant teachers also displayed a willingness to consult with the pupils in relation to the learning intentions for lessons. Therefore, the next section presents the strategy of 'open negotiation', which captures the encounters where discussion and debate between participant teachers and pupils established a 'shared' perspective of the learning intentions for lessons.

5.3.2.3 Open negotiation: sharing learning intentions

The strategy of open negotiation relates to the discussion and debate that took place between the teacher and pupil(s) specifically in relation to the learning intentions for a lesson or series of lessons. Open negotiation, which might take place at any point in a lesson, involved a 'bargaining' process between the teacher and the pupil(s) in a class. This bargaining process – as documented in the practices of Erika, Jessie, Stanley, Roddy, and Gaynor – involved the teacher and pupil(s) conceding their ideal definition of the learning intentions that ought to prevail in a lesson and finding a 'shared' perspective suitable for both parties.

The following extract is from Erika's lesson where she worked with an S3 all-girl class in the final lesson of a creative dance unit. During this observation, an informal conversation with Erika revealed the ways in which she openly negotiated with the pupils at the start of this unit of work to achieve a shared perspective of the learning intentions:

Paul: "So S3 girls for dance and it's the last week..."

Erika: "Yeah"

Paul: "And what's been the focus of the dance unit?"

Erika: "This class have basically made up the whole dance... We [started to] learn a whole class dance, but it didn't really work". Initially I had a dance planned that I was going to lead each week. My other S3 all girl class have really enjoyed it, but these girls were not responding to this approach during the first lesson. At the point where I realised this I chatted

with the pupils. I decided to let them work in smaller groups and changed what I wanted to achieve in the unit. In the smaller groups, pupils have worked well to design their own creative dance to the music. “Some groups are good and, well, you’ll see the ones that are not [so good]”. Erika informed me that the girls have just “taken the class forward” and she tried to do a “whole class dance, but there were issues” so she and the girls decided to work in smaller groups and she gave the pupils responsibility to create their own dances. (Erika on 28/03/2013)

In this extract, note how Erika originally set out with learning intentions to teach this class a highly choreographed dance routine. However, in the early stages of this dance unit, Erika was willing to openly negotiate these learning intentions with the girls, which resulted in these pupils creating and designing their own dances in small groups. A key point to acknowledge concerning the bargaining process that appeared to take place between Erika and these pupils is that both parties ‘traded-off’ their ideal perspectives and managed to find a shared perspective of the learning intentions for this dance unit. For instance, while Erika revised the learning intentions to enable the pupils to take more responsibility in lessons, the activity of dance remained as the focus for this unit of work. Correspondingly, while the pupils continued to participate in this unit of dance, revising the learning intentions provided opportunities for them to create their own dances in small groups. This open negotiation strategy, as explained above by Erika, illuminates the way in which the pupils also played a role in shaping the classroom practices captured in this study.

5.3.2.4 Section summary

This section has presented the ways in which the participant teachers negotiated and controlled the learning intentions for lessons and units of work. Figure 5-5 summarises the range of strategies that framed a ‘common’ or ‘shared’ perspective of learning intentions, suggesting that teachers and pupils simultaneously shaped the classroom practices that featured in this study.

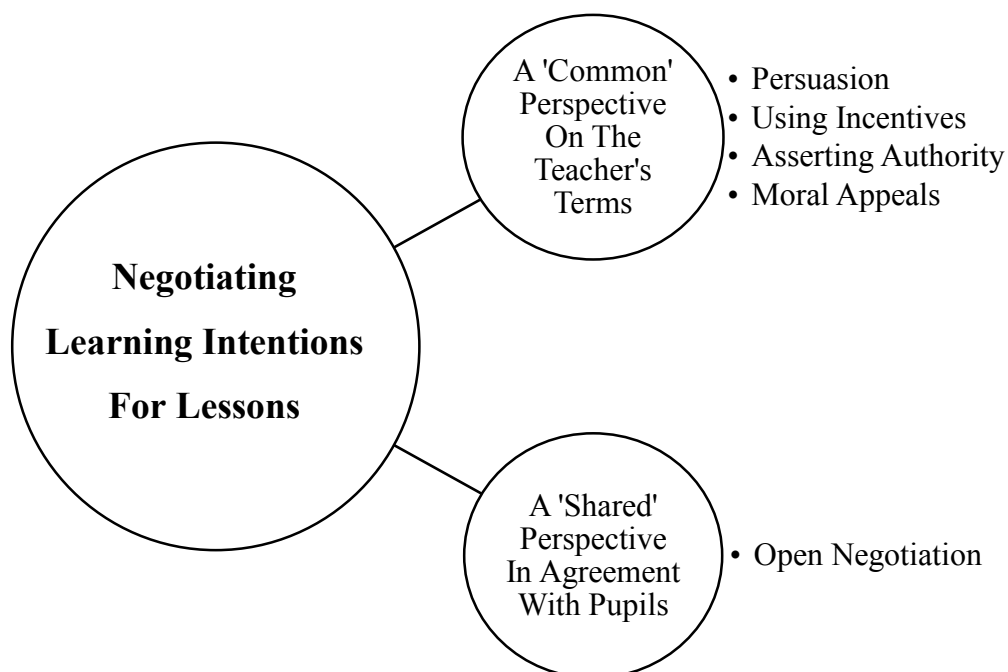


Figure 5-5: Negotiating a ‘Common’ and ‘Shared’ Perspective of Learning Intentions

The number of strategies – persuasion, incentives, asserting authority, moral appeals – required to establish a ‘common’ perspective of learning intentions, combined with a willingness of some teachers to negotiate openly a ‘shared’ perspective, suggests pupil agency had a stronger emphasis on participants’ practices in comparison to the accounts provided in past research studies.

Bringing attention to the fact that that pupil agency coloured the participant teachers’ practices, to a degree at least, highlights the potential for changeable and unpredictable situations to arise in the classroom. Therefore, the next section of this chapter explores the ways in which the participant teachers could respond flexibly during classes, making strategic changes to their practice in the immediate act of teaching.

5.3.3 Responding in the immediate act of teaching

This final section reports the ‘responsive’ nature of participants’ practices, which entailed these teachers making adaptations to their classroom actions in the

immediate act of teaching. Analysis of observation fieldnotes revealed that these adaptations tended to involve participant teachers making strategic adjustments to the content covered and teaching approaches used with a class or smaller subgroup of pupils. The following excerpt is from Seymour working with an S2 all-girl class on athletics, where the pupils were arranged in small groups and rotated round three throwing stations. The clear change that Seymour makes to his practice during this scene typifies the adaptations that participant teachers made to their practices throughout this study:

As the pupils rotated round the three stations, Seymour came over to where I was standing and started chatting. “What I was going to do is...” and Seymour explains that he has changed his plan for the lesson. He was going to have the pupils choosing their strongest throwing event and practising this action at the different stations. In other words, the whole class would have been performing across the three different throwing stations at the same time. However, Seymour added, “...but it’s not going to happen...I mean not with that lot [the pupils] at the moment”. A few minutes later, the pupils are asked to gather in close to Seymour. “OK girls” he says, “I was going to set it up and allow you to choose...but there’s too many people not concentrating so I just can’t have that...happy to start with one [event]” (Seymour on 23/05/2013)

In the preceding exchanges with Seymour, it is evident that he was working in a particular way with this class, but then he made a sudden change to his practice. It can be seen that this lesson quickly shifted in a different direction based on “that lot [the pupils] at the moment” and, accordingly, observation fieldnotes documented that later sections were more structured and teacher-directed in nature. While this extract depicts a distinct change in the lesson, it is important to point out that Seymour’s responsive actions appear to be strategic rather than arbitrary in nature. For example, we can infer from his “what I was going to do” comment that Seymour has fine-tuned this lesson in advance, formulating what he believes are appropriate learning intentions and practices for these pupils. Indeed, in this extract Seymour appears to make adaptations to his practice based on his realisation that the pupils were not able to achieve these learning intentions, providing him with a point of reference to make changes to the lesson.

Staying on this point about the strategic nature of responsiveness, other participant teachers' were alert to gauging whether or not pupils were heading 'off track' with the learning intentions during lessons. The following extract is from an observation of Erika's practice as she works with an S1 mixed class in a classroom-based unit on 'health'. After a health-based presentation from Erika and group discussions, the pupils started designing a poster to represent the key features of 'fixed' and 'growth' mind-sets:

"The girls appear to be really 'arty'" says Erika as she passes by where I am positioned for today's observation. Erika suddenly positions herself at the front of the classroom and asks the pupils to stop designing their posters. She moves over to the array of 'mind set' posters mounted on the wall from last year's S1 cohort.

Erika: "...so if I was to ask...which poster stands out...[Erika looks back and forth at the class and then at the posters]"

Pupil 1: "...the one with the swirls on it...[this is a brightly coloured poster, which uses a range of swirling patterns across the middle and around the edges of the poster]..."

Pupil 1: "The...coloured one...[Erika works with this pupil to ensure she points to the one he is meaning]"

Erika: "...what about this one [Erika points to a poster that lacks colour]?"

Pupil 2: "No...it's faded and you can't really see it."

After a few more pupils make comments, Erika urges the class to add more colour to their posters and to think more carefully about the general design. Erika came over to where I was standing soon after this class discussion and I ask, "you see that bit [I pointed at the posters on the wall] where you said which one stands out...did you plan or intend to do that?"

Erika: "Errrm...I just made it up!" (Erika on 30/10/2013)

This extract reveals Erika was quick to gauge that a sub-group of pupils were not working towards the learning intentions through this class activity. For instance, Erika recognised that "The girls appear to be really 'arty'" and a large section of

the class, in this case the boys, were not fulfilling their potential in the lesson. Erika's responsive actions involved making a subtle change to the lesson, in comparison to Seymour, which involved working briefly in a teacher-guided way with the pupils and then returning to the poster task.

The preceding extracts from Seymour and Erika have outlined how the participant teachers in this study could work in flexible ways by adapting their practices to match unfolding classroom situations. Informal conversations suggested this willingness to be responsive also connects back to their desire to tailor practices to the pupils in their classes. At the same time, the following quotation captures Jessie speaking about a "difficult balance" between being responsive during lessons and "giving in" to the pupils:

It's quite a difficult balance because you probably feel you're being a bit weak if you give in to things...you've got to be sure you're doing it [responding to the pupils in classroom situations] for the right reasons, and that you're not just...be seen to be giving in to them [the pupils] ...[But] it's very much you're going with their [the pupils] interest or enthusiasm.

These comments highlight the tension Jessie feels when making adaptations to her practice in the immediate act of teaching. There is a need to be alert to the "interest and enthusiasm" of the pupils while maintaining a degree of control in relation to the learning activities and events that take place in the classroom. This "difficult balance" shows the challenges of working in this responsive way, and the skilful practice of the participant teachers, to make *appropriate* adaptations to their practice in the immediate act of teaching.

5.3.3.1 *Section summary*

The 'responsive' nature of the practices presented in this section highlights how participants teachers made adaptations to their actions in the immediate act of teaching. The strategic nature of these responsive actions was interconnected with the fine-tuning of lessons which appeared to provide participant teachers with learning intentions that had been tailored to individual classes and this preceding

fine-tuning guided the changes made during lessons. Therefore, these two key features of practice – fine-tuning and responsiveness – interconnect in the following way: the participant teachers’ efforts to envisage appropriate practice ahead of lessons taking place were further supported by their ability to revise learning experiences and modes of practice in the immediate act of teaching. Reporting this responsive form of practice, however, revealed the “difficult balance” faced by teachers and emphasised the skilful ways in which they can adapt practice during lessons.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has shown how the teachers in this study worked with classes in varied and flexible ways, thereby enabling a more nuanced picture of the theoretical framework developed in this study to emerge. It has been shown that the participant teachers had a repertoire of approaches, albeit some teachers had a broader repertoire than others did. Indeed, analysis across the sample of participants revealed that no teacher had an exactly matching teaching repertoire. Given that all participant teachers interacted with classes in ways that aligned with more than one of the five of the framing categories, and the degree of diversity reported across the sample, this is a quite different account of practice than currently suggested in the physical education research literature. Chapter 7 of this thesis will discuss this teaching repertoire in more detail in a section entitled ‘challenging and supporting ‘direct’ teaching’.

The chapter then reported the ‘fine-tuning’, ‘negotiation and control’, and ‘responsive’ nature of practice, arguing that these key features enabled the flexible deployment of this broad teaching repertoire. The fine-tuned nature of the participant teachers’ practices revealed that a careful consideration of their practice took place in advance of units of work and before individual lessons. Participant teachers supported these initial efforts to fine-tune practice by negotiating and controlling the learning intentions with pupils, together with making adaptations to lessons during the immediate act of teaching. Reporting

these key features of practice has teased out the dynamic nature of classroom life and illuminated how participant teachers orchestrated the ‘who decides’ dimension of the theoretical framework (see Figure 4-1). Chapter 7 of this thesis will revisit these key features in more detail in sections entitled: ‘(re)conceptualising teaching as a highly dynamic enterprise’ and ‘expanding definitions of pedagogy: acknowledging the dynamic nature of teacher-pupil relationships’.

In the next chapter, a final layer of complexity is built in to the theoretical framework by considering the role teacher-pupil relationships played in the decisions these participant teachers made about *how* to employ their broad repertoire of teaching approaches.

Chapter 6 - Participant Teachers' Day-To-Day Practice: The Role of Relationships with Pupils

6.1 Introduction

Using the five framing categories of the theoretical framework set out in Chapter 4, Chapter 5 argued that participant teachers' practice was varied in nature. Drawing on observation data, findings indicated that each participant had a broad repertoire of teaching approaches spanning several of the framing categories that comprise the theoretical framework. Chapter 5 also painted a picture of classroom practice as a highly dynamic enterprise. This dynamic account hinged around the 'teacher-pupil power dynamic' element of the theoretical framework, which involved participant teachers working in a responsive way and negotiating a central role in '*who decides*' what is said and done in the classroom. In-depth *interviews* provided opportunities to explore the framework derived from observations with the participant teachers. While participant teachers endorsed this account of their practice during formal interviews, they, crucially, added a key insight that refined the theoretical framework developed from the observational phase of this study.

The purpose of this present chapter is to examine closely the interview findings to track this key insight and capture the nuances of these teachers' classroom practices. Analysis of interview transcripts revealed the extent to which the participant teachers identified '*relationships*' with pupils as a key matter informing their day-to-day practices. To scrutinise these 'relationships', this chapter is structured into two main sections. The first section will briefly present findings to establish the link that participant teachers identified between these 'relationships' and the decisions they made about their classroom practice; that is, decisions relating to how they employed their broad repertoire of teaching approaches identified in Chapter 5.

The second, more extensive, section will delineate the main factors that participant teachers identified as influencing and informing these relationships. While these main factors are presented in turn for clarity of exposition, as this chapter unfolds, the reader should bear in mind that these relationships are contingent upon an interactive ‘mix’ of these four main factors which combine in various and constantly changing ways. Building on the idea that these relationships are linked to participant teachers’ ‘personality’ and their own ideas about education garnered from professional experiences, this section will argue that these relations are more complex than initial impressions might suggest. Analysis of interview transcripts revealed these relationships develop over time and through familiarity with classes, but they also appear to be patterned by a number of local (i.e., activity tasks, school expectations) and wider (i.e., political) contextual factors.

The interview phase of the research provided an opportunity to explore the theoretical framework with the participant teachers that participated in this study. While these teacher-pupil relationships were difficult to capture, and figured less prominently in my observation work, they were a striking feature of the interview phase of the research. The methodological design of this present study, which combined observation and interview research methods, appears to have been crucial in refining the overall quality of the theoretical framework.

6.2 Teacher-Pupil Relationships: Making Connections to Participant Teachers’ Practice

In discussing classroom practice, as depicted by the theoretical framework, all participants specifically mentioned the need to develop “relationships” with the pupils in their classes. Indeed, these relationships appeared to be a key driver for the many decisions that participant teachers made about their classroom practice. The following exchange between Gaynor and myself confirmed the link between the relationships she has with particular classes and the “*conscious decision[s]*” she makes about her classroom practice:

Paul: I've seen quite a lot of variation in the way that you're able to work with different groups of people and I'll be more specific about the different variances that I've seen in your practice in a minute, but would you say that's about right that you've got various ways that you can work quite comfortably?

Gaynor: Yeah, definitely, I think I make a conscious decision, based on the relationship I build up with the class. Being a sort of fairly new teacher...at this school I mean I think the first lesson you came out to see me I'd only been at the school three months and by then I felt like I knew my classes even quite well to understand what the best approaches were for the different classes, and they [the classes] are different.

In this quotation, consider the way in which the initial aim of this exchange is simply to confirm the variation captured in Gaynor's day-to-day practice. (Chapter 5, has already set out that observations in Gaynor's classes documented a broad repertoire of teaching approaches that included forms of teacher-directed, teacher-guided, and teacher-pupil negotiated practice.) On her account, it appears that teacher-pupil relationships played a large part in deciding the "best approaches...for the different classes" that were observed during the present study.

Other participants identified a connection between these relationships and the ways in which they employed various teaching approaches. For example, in the next statement, note the way in which Erika, like Gaynor, confirms a connection between these relationships and the decisions she makes about her classroom practice:

Paul: I have seen quite a lot of variation in the way that you can work...but would you agree that's something that you can do, that you're able to work in different ways with different classes?

Erika: You need to build a relationship with people in your class first of all...I think a lot of the classes that you came to were classes that I've had for quite a while...

In this exchange, Erika was also keen to point out that, while she had a broad repertoire of teaching approaches, these approaches are not always enacted with

all classes and at all times. Therefore, as explained by Gaynor and Erika, these teaching approaches are more than a set of ‘tools’ to be readily implemented in any and all situations.

Participant teachers’ accounts of their practice as a thoughtfully driven endeavour had major implications for the theoretical framework. Recognising the five framing categories as more than a set of ‘tools’ that are simply deployed in the classroom highlights that there are wider issues and concerns that may enable or constrain teachers’ practices with different classes. With participant teachers indicating during their interviews that these relationships pattern the decisions they make about their practice, it was accordingly necessary to modify the theoretical framework. The ‘what decides’ dimension depicted in Figure 4-1 was positioned within the teacher-pupil power dynamic element of the theoretical framework. This dimension represents the ways in which these relationships enabled and constrained participants’ deployment of their broad teaching repertoire.

Subsequent sections present the main factors participants identified as informing these relationships with pupils and these are used to throw light on the ‘what decides’ conundrum of teachers’ classroom practices.

6.3 Teacher-Pupil Relationships: Mapping Out the Main Factors

Having established a link between teacher-pupil relationships and classroom practice, the main purpose of this section is to delineate the main factors that the participants represented as influencing and informing these relationships. The participant teachers agreed in identifying a number of influences associated with these teacher-pupil relationships. At the heart of this cluster of ideas were ‘respect’, ‘time’, and ‘familiarity’. In the next quotation, note how Erika, in discussing relationships in her interview, encapsulates all three of these ideas very clearly:

Paul: You mentioned about a relationship there. What do you mean by that? What does that involve?

Erika: Well, I think...when you first meet your class I think you need to be quite firm with them and they need to know what the boundaries are, and they need to know that you are like a human being as well, and you [the teacher] need to be respectful towards them [the pupils]...

This quotation was typical of the majority of participant teachers' comments in that they all spontaneously mentioned the importance of developing "relationships" with classes and, with further prompting, they highlighted several influences as being central to these relations. As Erika's comments unfolded, she identified the core elements of teacher-pupil relationships:

- there was shared *respect* between the teacher and pupil(s);
- a degree of *familiarity* was required in relation to how the teacher and pupils work in the classroom and this involves setting out boundaries, especially from the first encounter with a class;
- a first encounter with a class may be a quite different experience as relations between teacher and pupils(s) take *time* to develop.

While Seymour also talked about relationships with his classes and raised similar influences to those identified by Erika, in the following quotation he was keen to assert that a number of *contextual factors* further patterned these relations:

Seymour: There's sometimes health and safety issues that dictate what is happening and sometimes you have to say, no, I want it done like this and I want it done like this now...Errrm [sigh]...Unfortunately there's certain things we do want to get through, you know, in terms of experiences and outcomes to cover, you know, health and wellbeing, experiences and outcomes [from current CfE policy documentation]; there's still an element, you know, if you're doing basketball you still want them to be learning basketball related skills...and if senior management say to me like what are kids learning in basketball just now I need to be able to turn round and say to a senior manager, well they are learning this...

In the above quotation, Seymour acknowledged that these contextual factors are not only in the immediate classroom or in school settings, but these also include influences from wider political settings. Seymour's statement recognised local contextual factors as: the physical activity he is leading, the activity related skills that need to be covered in lessons, and the expectations of senior managers in the school setting. Seymour also recognised wider contextual factors that can be seen as being mainly political in nature, driven by aims and expectations set out in educational policy documents and the guidelines upholding professional standards of teaching.

In summary, participants viewed 'relationships' with pupils as key to their practice and to the deployment of particular approaches; and identified the following central influences on these relationships: respect; time; familiarity; and contextual factors. Subsequent sections look closely at each of these key influences and their effects in turn, starting with respect.

6.3.1 Respect: generating scope for a broad range of teacher-pupil interactions

The quotation from Erika presented on p. 217 illustrated how 'respect' was a key element in all the participants' accounts of teacher-pupil relationships. A similar emphasis on respect as the key feature associated with relationships is evident in the following quotation from Roddy's interview. As he reflected on the theoretical framework, Roddy used an example from one of his classes, a "very difficult" S3 all-boys' class, to make a point about respect and teacher-pupil relationships:

Roddy: ...one boys' class on a Wednesday just now...they're a bunch that don't really engage with teachers or school as a whole... I do get respect from them and they do work for me compared to some [teachers]...and again I would put that down to a kind of mutual respect thing. I would always state if they do do anything we always have a big thing is an individual chat and...let them know how they've made me feel, as in, look, I'm showing you respect, I deserve a bit back...

These comments connect the idea of respect to the ways in which people are treated in the classroom. The essence of respect, according to these teachers, appeared to involve being mindful of the rights, worth, and feelings of *all* people in the classroom: the teacher and the pupils. In other words, while these teachers appeared to demand respect *from* the pupils, evidence suggests they also showed a genuine regard and respect *for* the pupils in their classes.

While Stanley had similar ideas about respect, he admitted he does not always get the “same respect” from pupils:

Stanley: I think a mutual respect, as well, which again is probably something that I hadn’t really thought of when I first came into teaching, but I now understand is very, very important, is being able to have a mutual respect.

Paul: Tell me a bit more about that, and this mutual respect idea that you just mentioned there.

Stanley: Well, I think, obviously the whole mutual respect thing goes both ways. I have to treat them [the pupils] with the same respect I expect to be treated back and normally I don’t get it [mutual respect] back but that’s fine!

In this quotation, Stanley acknowledged he does not always get mutual respect back from the pupils. In these situations, his response was simply: “that’s fine!” Here we can infer that a minor break down in mutual respect *from* pupils is unlikely to challenge Stanley’s overall respect *for* pupils. Participants appeared to treat pupils with respect, not because the pupils were respectful towards them at all times, but because the teachers themselves had a strong personal commitment to be respectful people.

Several participants identified their understanding of relationships with pupils, and the notion of shared respect in particular, as a personal perspective linked to their ‘personality’ and their own ideas about education. The following quotation from Jessie illustrates how the participants made these connections:

Jessie: I think your personality comes out a wee bit in the way you teach... Well I think I'm probably a fairly reasonable person. And fairly even tempered. Fairly willing to answer why and explain... to explain and to be open... I don't like being too direct [in my teaching]. That's probably not me to be, di di di di di, like that although there's nothing wrong with that. It's fine if that's the way somebody [wants to teach classes]... I, you know, I would listen to children and what they say...

This comment exemplifies the intertwined nature of classroom practice where Jessie's respectful personality and her own educational ideas about moving beyond "direct" teaching, led her to interact with pupils in many different ways. Observation research presented in the previous chapter corroborates this assertion where Jessie's actions in the classroom were represented by all five framing categories that compose the theoretical framework. Therefore, it appears that the participant teachers decide *what* happens in the classroom by drawing upon their personally held perspectives to inform their day-to-day practice.

Comments made by participant teachers during their interviews also indicated how these relationships, founded upon a respect *for* the pupils' rights, created conditions for the pupils themselves to contribute meaningfully to the events that took place in the classroom. For example, preceding quotations from Roddy and Stanley emphasised a "*mutual*" form of respect. Rather than participant teachers overtly dominating events, these comments suggest that the pupils also had a relevant role to play in deciding *what* happened in the classroom. The following comments by Gaynor support a view that these relationships were reciprocal in nature and provided the capacity for *interactive* exchanges to take place between the teacher and pupils:

Gaynor: ...if I didn't have that relationship, if it was a... if it was a strictly, I'm a teacher, you're my pupils, you'll do what I say, I don't think I would have had that... I'm going to use a big word here... reciprocity...

Paul: It's not just teacher and pupil but there's a two-way sort of exchange almost. Is that what you're saying, is it?

Gaynor: Yeah, and I thought it was quite a mature level for them [the pupils] to be on...

Gaynor's preceding comments suggest that there are situations in classes where the teacher-pupil interactions are *reciprocal* in nature and involve much more than "I'm a teacher, you're my pupils...do what I say". In other words, any exchanges between the teacher and a pupil(s) are not always a unilateral arrangement geared in favour of the teacher. Therefore, the nature of these relationships appear to offer potential for teacher-pupil interactions associated with the following framing categories outlined in earlier chapters of this thesis: teacher-guided, pupil-led, teacher-pupil negotiated, and pupil-initiated practices.

Given this interpretation of relationships is best characterised as an interactive exchange, the '*what decides*' dimension of the theoretical framework has to acknowledge that the pupils also play a role in deciding what happens or does not happen in the classroom. This interactive exchange between teacher and pupil(s) in the classroom, founded upon respect and reciprocity, is summarised in Figure 6-1:

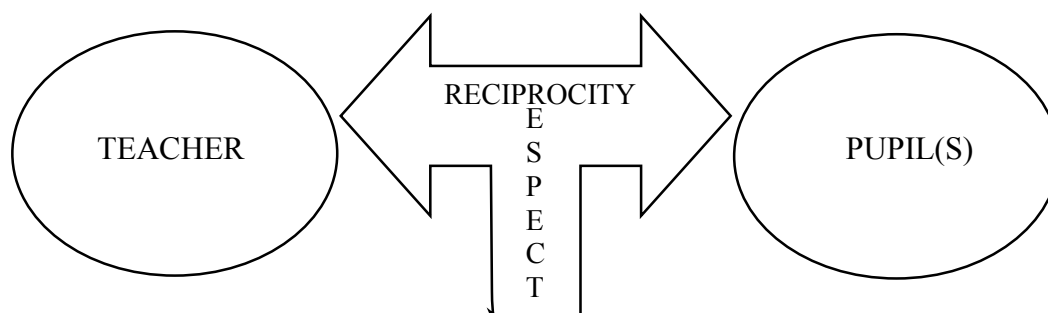


Figure 6-1: Relationships and Respect: Creating Reciprocity Between Teacher and Pupils

6.3.1.1 Section summary

Much of this section has presented findings to evidence respect as a main factor that informed and underpinned teacher-pupil relationships as represented by

participant teachers. By making connections to participant teachers' personality and ideas about education, this interpretation of respect was generally concerned with the rights, worth, and feelings of *all* people in the classroom; that is, it involved a shared or mutual respect between the teachers and the pupils.

Moving on, the next section considers the central influences on relationships of 'familiarity' and 'time'. These two factors are considered together, as the analysis of the participants' accounts revealed that they acted synergistically.

6.3.2 Recognising familiarity and time as major factors influencing teacher-pupil relationships

Participant teachers' comments suggested that 'familiarity' and 'time' appeared to provide a degree of structure or orderliness to classroom life. Following sub-sections will demonstrate that participant teachers managed to establish 'ground rules' for the day-to-day events that took place in the classroom via familiarity and, over time, pupils became very well aware of these while in a lesson(s). Rather than viewing the structure or orderliness associated with these relations in a negative light, participant teachers perceived these as an essential part of classroom life that enabled and enhanced their day-to-day practice.

6.3.2.1 Familiarity

The majority of participants acknowledged the need for the teacher and pupils to gain a concomitant familiarity with how each other works in the classroom. Gaynor, (in common with Erika, Jessie, Stanley, and Seymour), revealed that familiarity contributes to a classroom "routine" and this was specifically identified as beneficial for her practice:

Gaynor: I feel that that's half the battle, once they [the pupils] understand the routine, the importance of it, then they [the pupils] can get more out of a lesson because we [the teacher and pupils] can move on quicker, so you know, I try to explain that...

According to Gaynor then, a straightforward benefit of familiarity was an efficient classroom “routine”. This “routine” appeared to offer potential for her to “get more out of a lesson” by being able to “move on quicker” and maximise the time available. There is a suggestion from Gaynor that, in becoming aware of these routines over time, pupils are socialised into the day-to-day operations and expectations of the classroom. The need for classroom routines is a reminder of the inextricable link between teacher-pupil interactions and the time and space available in school settings. Given that teachers and pupils are not free to pursue learning experiences in classes at their leisure, the five framing categories presented in the theoretical framework should also reflect the specific contextual demands where they take place; a later section of this chapter will discuss salient contextual factors in more detail.

Meantime, in terms of pupils being socialised into the routines of day-to-day classroom life, Seymour explained the potential this offered for both the teacher and pupils to make “a bit of judgement” during classes. In the following statement he uses an example from an S3 all girl class, where he asked them to lead a warm up in small groups, to explain the way in which familiarity enabled the girls to make judgements about the task and him to make judgements about their ability to complete the task:

Seymour: I basically opened up the cupboard and said, “Right, you can use any bit of equipment you want.”...but they knew what the structure of a warm-up was so they could still do that and every group did something different and if I had, if I had tried to explain that to kids and set that up, honestly it would have taken me about half an hour, you know, to say, right this is what we’re doing, but within two minutes they’d organised their equipment and...It was just action everywhere and it was really good. So there was a combination of they had had the routine, you know, from the recall, things that we had done on warm-up, there was obviously a bit of judgment on me in terms of did I feel that I could let them loose with that task...you know, working certain groups, errrm you know. I knew looking at the groups, did they have enough leaders and things...

Familiarity between the teacher and these pupils enabled a *relative* degree of freedom in terms of the actions of both parties in the classroom. Other participants

expressed similar ideas. Developing an understanding of each other by virtue of this familiarity appeared to create scope for the teacher and the pupil(s) to make judgements in relation to the likely, or the expected, responses in various classroom situations. In other words, familiarity brought a degree of predictability, structure, or *orderliness* to classroom life. While participants handled situations with new classes in rather different ways – Erika admitted she is “firm” at the start and Seymour explained he takes a “gamble” to see how new classes respond – they all recognised familiarity as helping to make judgements and decisions in relation to their practice. Teachers *and* pupils managed to orient their actions within what pupils were led to understand were the appropriate ‘norms’ of the classroom.

Looking at how these ‘norms’ were shaped in the immediate class situation, participants repeatedly asserted the central role of *the teacher* in establishing “boundaries” in the classroom. During her interview, Erika commented at length on setting out “boundaries” in the classroom:

Erika: As soon as they [the pupils] know what their boundaries are and they [the pupils] know what you [the teacher] will accept and what you [the teacher] won’t accept and what you [the teacher] want them [the pupils] to do then I generally think that kids are quite willing to work for you [the teacher]...

Consonant with the above quotation, participant teachers’ references to “boundaries” or “standards” largely related to the behaviour expected of the pupils as well as the parameters for completing various classroom tasks and activities. For instance, in Erika’s preceding comments there is evidence of boundaries relating to behaviour when she refers to what she “will accept” and “won’t accept” and to classroom tasks when she refers to “what you [the teacher] want them [the pupils] to do”. These two types of boundaries – behavioural and task – seemed to function alongside each other to provide a degree of orderliness to the classroom giving pupils ‘ground rules’ to guide their actions.

Preceding pages have suggested the ‘norms’ of the classroom are mainly established by the teacher. However, the broader expectations of a school also appeared to have an underlying influence on the ‘norms’ of the classroom. In the next quotation, Stanley indicates how the broader expectations of the school are embedded within the immediate classroom context:

Stanley: Hopefully they [the pupils] know where the boundaries are, and they [the pupils] will know what happens if they [the pupils] cross the boundaries, as such. Then, as I said, the [school] disciplinary policy would kick in for that...

Thus, the school’s disciplinary policy may not only lead pupils towards conforming to these broader school expectations, but it is also in place to handle moments where pupils appear to “cross the boundaries”. While an earlier section of this chapter discussed relationships as a reciprocal exchange between the teacher and pupils, it also appears that the ‘norms’ of the classroom, informed by broader school expectations, influence the nature of these relations and the decisions teachers make about classroom practice.

To recap, this section has exemplified the ways in which familiarity shapes teacher-pupil relationships. As summarised in Figure 6-2, the participant teachers’ accounts of their practice suggest that familiarity with pupils is closely associated with the form of respect discussed in an earlier section of this chapter. A developing sense of familiarity between the teacher and pupils together with the boundaries that teachers establish in the classroom simultaneously create ‘ground rules’ for the events that take place in classes. In fostering a degree of familiarity, the participant teachers believed that these relations with pupils established an orderliness to classroom life, enhancing the potential for working in interactive, reciprocal ways with classes.

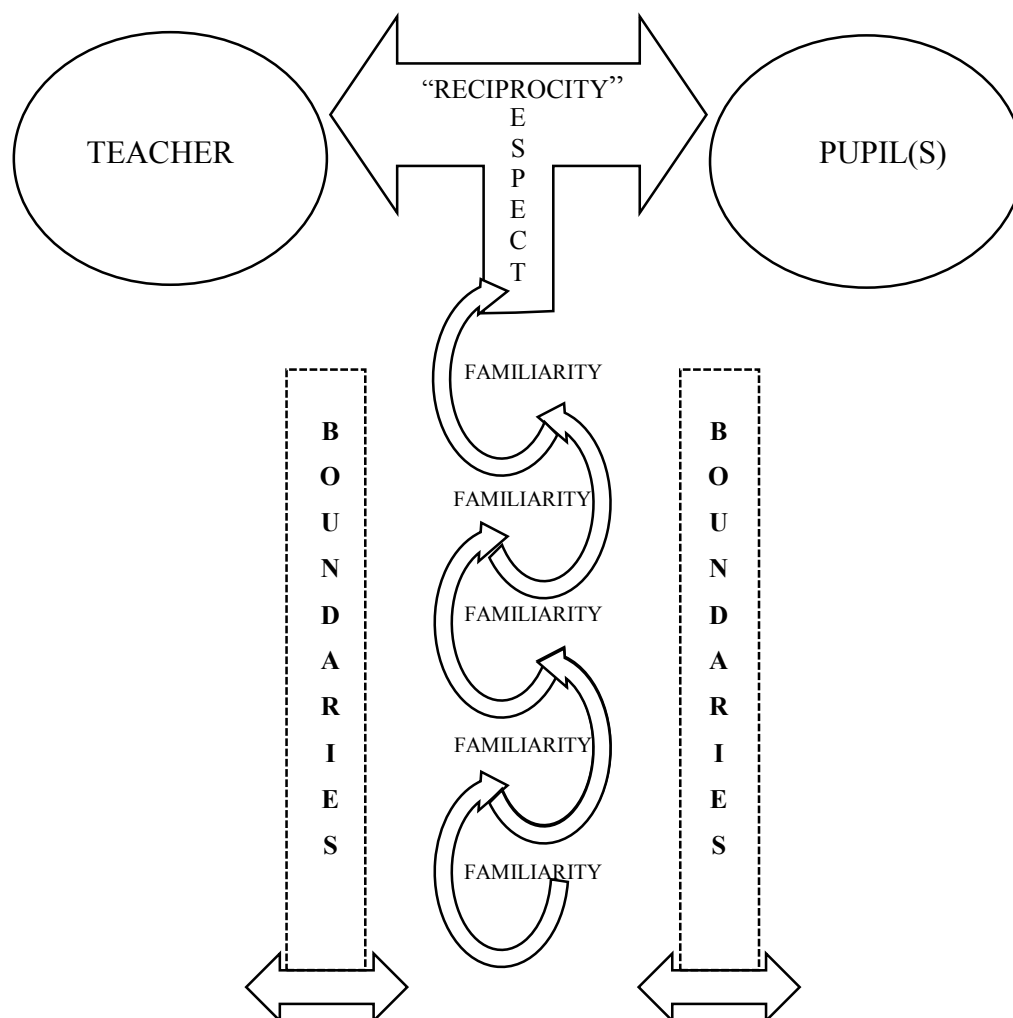


Figure 6-2: Teacher-pupil Relationships: Highlighting Connections Between Respect and Familiarity

6.3.2.2 Time

During the interviews, ‘time’ emerged as a key influence on relationships as this afforded the opportunity for the teacher to become more familiar with the pupils in classes. Rather than presenting a straightforward account of time in relation to familiarity, where more time equated to more familiarity, the analysis of participants’ comments about time revealed a more complex picture. Subsequent sections will present participant teachers’ interpretations of time as an interconnected phenomenon where past and future experiences overlapped in

present classroom situations. In doing so, the discussion that follows also raises major issues concerning the observation research carried out as part of this thesis.

The teachers' interview comments in preceding sections of this chapter have already alluded to the key factor of time as part of teacher-pupil relationships. For instance, in an earlier quotation Erika explained "...a lot of the classes that you came to [observe as part of the research] were classes that I've had for quite a while". Likewise, Gaynor mentioned "...the first lesson you came out to see me [to observe as part of the research] I'd only been at the school three months...I felt like I knew my classes...quite well". Erika and Gaynor believed that because many of the classes visited during the research observations were ones they had worked with for an extended period, they were quite well acquainted with the pupils; that is, they had time to establish a degree of familiarity with the class.

Seymour was another teacher who recognised research observations took place with classes he had worked with for an extended period. However, in recounting his experiences with a *newly acquired* class, Seymour revealed a rather different perspective to that captured in Erika and Gaynor's preceding quotations:

Seymour: I just felt that even some of the relationships between me and the girls had started to break down. I don't know, maybe just the fact that...I mean, I didn't know them [the pupils] particularly well...

Paul: You mentioned there about, I didn't know them [the pupils] at the start. Is that quite an important thing that you need to somehow get to know them over time?

Seymour: I would say so...I think if you really want the best out of pupils on a consistent basis, I think relationships are key, good relationships with your pupils.

This quotation shows the relationship between Seymour and this class was at an early stage and there was a tendency for these relations to break down because he "didn't know them [the pupils] particularly well"; that is, he did not have sufficient time to establish a degree of familiarity with the class. A later comment

from Erika's interview further evidences the claim that teachers work quite actively to establish these relationships during the early encounters they have with newly acquired classes:

Erika: I think every time you've got a new class, well firstly you need to go over the rules and stuff with them, and you need to be consistent with them. So they need to know what you do accept and what you don't accept...Children need to learn...you need to actually teach the mannerisms and stuff that you want them to demonstrate...

Given that Erika specifically associated intensive efforts with "a new class", this suggests there was a lesser need for her to sustain the intensity of these efforts over time as the desired "rules" and "mannerisms" become a more integrated part of classroom life through familiarity and the associated routines and 'norms' discussed earlier. Therefore, the immediately observable actions in the classroom appear to be encased by many 'moments-over-time'; that is, the previous encounters that take place between the teacher and pupils over a series of lessons.

However, in claiming that teacher-pupil relationships are established over time, this is not to suggest that relationships can always be fashioned or that these relationships progress in a linear way towards a particular standard with classes. Gaynor commented at length about the fluid nature of teacher-pupil relationships and the ways in which these relations are dynamic and subject to continual change. In the following quotation, she speaks specifically about an S3 all-girl class where she endeavoured to establish and maintain a relationship with the class as a whole as well as with what she called "four different groups of characters" in the class.

Gaynor: The example I just said previously there about how I had brought them all together [the four different groups of characters] to play a game of basketball and it just completely fell on its backside...So when that lesson didn't work and I had to say to them, I'm really upset...after that lesson every girl after that came and said, Miss are you okay, we didn't mean that...sorry...I [Gaynor] thought, well that's good we can have these conversations, we can learn from it and we can move on and we can see where we go from next week.

This quotation exemplifies the unstable nature of teacher-pupil relationships whereby, even after teaching a class for several months, the lesson “fell on its backside”, Gaynor ended up “really upset”, and pupils felt compelled to say “sorry”. Gaynor’s comment also points out the need to develop multiple relationships with classes, providing insight into the complexity and challenges for teachers aiming to develop these relations in the classroom. Given this complexity, it appears that teacher-pupil relationships are not a static phenomenon held in a steady state with a bit of intensive effort from the teacher when starting out with a newly acquired class and then supported with less intensive efforts with the passing of time.

Rather, Gaynor’s preceding comments portray the way in which both she and the pupils in class were able to “learn from it”, “move on”, and “see where we go” in future lessons. Thus, alongside ‘moments over time’, the immediately observable actions in the classroom, appear to be informed and guided by participant teachers’ ambitions for these relationships in the ‘moments ahead of time’. In other words, the immediately observable actions in the classroom may also be influenced by teachers’ foresight of these relationships in future lessons. One might argue that, in next week’s lesson, the relationship between Gaynor and this S3 all-girl class may not necessarily remain the same because of this encounter. In other words, these relations will need to be reappraised “from next week” and Gaynor may have a vision of how these will be redefined in future weeks.

Preceding paragraphs have argued that time is an interconnected phenomenon with encounters from the past and visions of the future simultaneously shaping the nature of these relationships in the present moment; this interpretation of time is summarised in Figure 6-3. Indeed, this interpretation of time created a major challenge for the observational phase of this current research study. As acknowledged earlier, while observation research was effective at documenting the actions that took place in an immediate lesson, it was limited in the sense that it only captured the actions from a ‘moment-in-time’; this point will be re-visited in the discussion chapter.

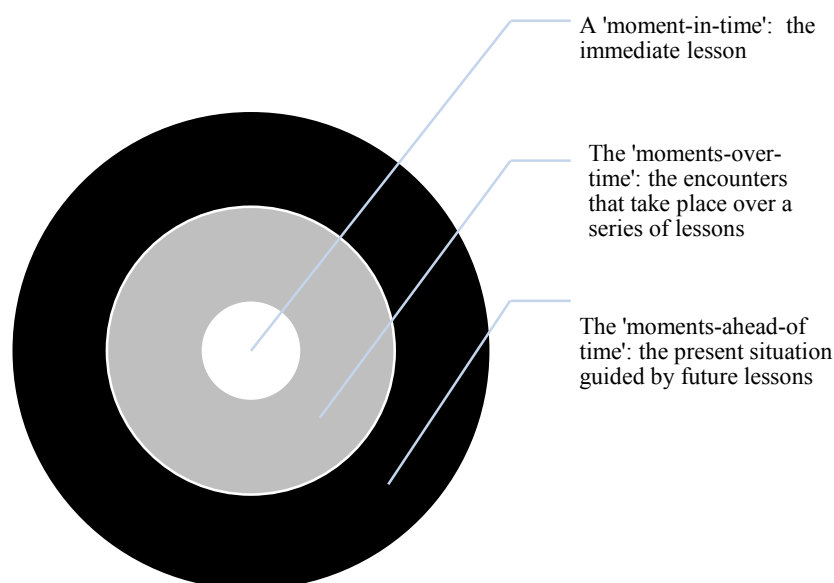


Figure 6-3: The Inter-connected Nature of 'Time' and Teacher-pupil Relationships

6.3.2.3 Section summary

This section has provided an overview of familiarity and time as two of the main factors that participant teachers identified as influencing the relationships they strike up with classes. Familiarity was presented as a process whereby the pupils were socialised into the day-to-day operations and expectations of classroom life and the teachers' approaches and actions were attentive to the characteristics of an individual class. 'Routines' and 'norms' were presented as a way in which pupils became aware of the appropriate and expected actions and behaviour in the classroom. The teacher, supported by wider school policies, had a key role in setting out the expected actions and behaviours in the classroom via behavioural and task boundaries. Time was discussed as an interconnected phenomenon where the historical exchanges between a teacher and pupils were merged with visions of the future to steer the nature of these relationships in the present moment. This overlapping interpretation of time was identified as problematic for research observations conducted as a major part of the current study.

The next section will discuss the ways in which local and wider contextual factors influence these teacher-pupil relationships.

6.3.3 Teacher-pupil relationships: the role of local and wider contextual factors and the impacting nature of physical activities

While preceding sections have presented respect, familiarity, and time, as main factors, we cannot overlook the extent to which contextual factors and the nature of physical activities shape these relationships and the subsequent decisions made about classroom practice. Seymour's comments presented on p. 217 were used to exemplify two distinct 'layers' of contextual factors; those operating at local levels and those operating at a wider level:

- Local contextual factors were related to the immediate class environment and the broader locale of the school setting. Some shared factors across participant teachers in regards to the immediate class environment were the facilities, duration of a lesson or a series of lessons, and the equipment available in the department. A shared factor in regards to the broader locale of the school was the expectations of senior managers.
- Wider contextual factors were identified as originating from beyond the school setting. One shared wider contextual factor was the aims and expectations set out in Scottish education policy documents. Another was the health and safety issues associated with particular physical activities and settings, influenced by the Scottish guidelines that uphold professional teaching standards.

It is recognised that there may be more contextual 'layers' operating within and between these local and wider levels. However, these two distinct 'layers' have been identified for discussion in subsequent paragraphs for two main reasons: firstly, these were identified as common themes that featured in the interview comments across the research participants; secondly, for the strong degree of

relevance these factors have in relation to the theoretical framework developed in the present study.

The participant teachers identified the immediate classroom environment as affecting relationships with the pupils in their classes. For example, in the following extract, Stanley's comments explain how the duration of lessons and units of work at his school inhibit the possibilities to work in a pupil-led fashion for prolonged periods while the facilities available at the 'new' school have enriched his practice:

Paul: I've seen you teaching a lot, and I've seen you teaching in various ways, but...what gets in the way?

Stanley: Well, I think you've got your predictable things; your predictable things being your time constraints. During the lesson, the time constraints, and then the time constraints of your block of activity which you have to do. And that, for me personally, I think that's when the more teacher-led approach comes to the forefront...you know, I know what we're looking for here, and I know that I'm left with one period to do this in...and the discovery method towards them, looking at, you know, figuring things out for themselves needs a bit more time; it needs more time to do it. So you've got the predictable things like that...

Paul: Anything else that, maybe not always stops you doing things, but that allows you to teach in these different ways?

Stanley: Well, the positive, the biggest positive I can draw from the previous three years is the facilities that I now have to work in. Most of the time I have the area that I would like, which is spacious enough, and equipped enough that I can adjust [my teaching approaches]...at the new school...everything is brand new. Yeah, it's attractive to people to get involved in, and we have a lot more in the way of facilities, so I think that has a much more positive effect than what I had previously [at the 'old' school].

Alongside the immediate classroom environment, participant teachers identified the broader locale of the school setting as affecting relations in the classroom. Seymour, for example, pointed out in a quotation presented earlier (see p. 217) that the expectations of senior managers in the school often steers what happens

and does not happen in the classroom. Other participant teachers similarly identified school managers and an array of broader school initiatives as influencing their classroom practice. In the following example, Jessie refers to the broader “back drop” of her school as being quite “structured” in nature:

Jessie: I mean part of the back drop here...is that the way things are structured here, there's this learning and teaching group...they lead each of the learning communities in whatever we're doing. The first year we did it, we all worked on the same theme...and the second year we've been able to select whatever our little learning community feels they want to pursue within the school improvement plan.

This quotation explains the way in which teachers are expected to be part of a professional working group within the school and these learning communities are geared towards achieving the aims and objectives of the improvement plan set out by senior managers. Note the way in which Jessie recognises there is a degree of choice in terms of the initiatives explored in these working groups and through her classroom practice, but these are specifically chosen from a narrow range of options set out in the school improvement plan. Thus, classroom practice, and the resulting relationships with pupils, appears to be influenced by broader school contextual factors originating from beyond the immediate classroom situation.

All participant teachers commented about the effects of various physical activities on the decisions they make about their practice. The following quotation from Erika explains the way in which the physical activity pursued in a lesson(s) links inextricably to the decisions she makes about her teaching practice:

Erika: Well, things like dance and some things, and gymnastics are really good for pupil led stuff, whereas activities... Well, it depends what you're doing in gymnastics. As long as things aren't dangerous. Whereas things like athletics, that's something I've found quite hard because of all the safety stuff, so you kind of feel you're having to be like this is how to do it and be a little bit more strict.... Especially in your first couple of lessons, like in the shot putt or whatever and you have to...and javelin, you have to be really strict... But whereas maybe a couple of lessons down the line you can start to do more pupil led stuff. But again it's probably not as easy to do it in athletics as it is in something like dance.

This quotation suggests there may be physical activities (or certain skills and events within activities) that are better suited to some teaching approaches than others are. In other words, depending on the nature of the activity pursued, there is a need for Erika to ‘open and close’ the task boundaries she sets out for a class based on the specific demands of a physical activity. Erika’s previous comment inferred that in pursuing certain physical activities, where there may be safety concerns for pupils’ health and well-being, she might be compelled to work in particular ways. Therefore, specifically in relation to respect, one of the main factors of teacher-pupil relationships identified earlier, the nature of physical activities appear to create situations that ‘override’ a teacher’s ability to be reciprocal and interactive with pupils at all times.

However, in pursuing this connection further with Erika during the interview, she later revealed the extent to which time and familiarity, two main factors of teacher-pupil relationships, start to inform and change what is possible within and between different activities:

Paul: ...so depending on the activity, obviously, that we might start off quite strict, as you’ve called it [Erika laughs out loud here], and gradually shift and open up [the task boundaries] a little bit more as time goes on...

Erika: Yeah. Once you build a relationship with people and you get a good rapport with them...then you can start to do more with them once they’ve got the technique and they know the safety...and what you want them to do.

While there was a degree of diversity across participants teachers’ comments in relation to the exact ways in which physical activities influenced their practice, identifying a connection between teachers’ practice and the nature of physical activities supports two major points raised in earlier sections of this chapter. Firstly, recognising the connection between activities and the decisions teachers make about their practice more generally corroborates the claim that these teaching approaches are more than a set of ‘tools’ that are simply deployed by the teacher. In other words, rather than following a familiar pattern of interactions

with the pupils, this group of teachers carefully matched their teaching practices to the demands of the physical activity being pursued in a class. Secondly, Erika's immediately preceding comment not only evidences how physical activities inform these relationships, but it also highlights the interactive 'mix' of these factors where familiarity and time may simultaneously enable and constrain the possibilities within and between different activities. Therefore, depending on the interplay of these factors, some teaching practices may have featured more readily than others did during research observations.

Looking beyond the school context, participant teachers also acknowledged a number of wider contextual factors as having some influence on their practice. As illustrated by Seymour's comments, (see p. 217), a wider contextual factor consistent across all participant teachers' interview comments was the aims and expectations set out in current education policy documents in Scotland. However, while all participant teachers acknowledged this wider, political influence, the resulting impact on their classroom practice tended to be relatively modest in nature. In other words, all participant teachers confirmed current curriculum policy had an *evolutionary* effect, rather than a revolutionary effect, on their practice. For example, the following series of quotations from Stanley, Roddy, and Gaynor evidence this claim.

Stanley explained:

I don't feel as if...okay, the Curriculum for Excellence has arrived now; I have to change what I'm doing in order to fulfil this, in order to achieve all these experiences and outcomes. I think that that was being done anyway.

Roddy indicated:

I'm quite a big fan of CFE...To be honest, it's not changed the way I work. However, it's given me more...an extra focus, if you like...it lets you express this kind of social gains as well...I wouldn't say it's changed my teaching as such, but it's given...it's changed the focus of the teaching sometimes, if you know what I mean.

Gaynor pointed out:

...the new curriculum, the curriculum for excellence...It really focuses on process as opposed to product...so the process of learning or the process of understanding...now then that's when I suppose my guided teacher practice then comes a bit more into play...I suppose the curriculum for excellence has maybe helped me understand that I need to be a bit more guided.

As demonstrated in this series of interview quotations, the influence of current curriculum policy appeared to involve participants placing more emphasis on certain existing features of their practice. The quotation taken from Gaynor's interview perhaps exemplified this distinction most clearly, where she recognised she was already teaching classes in ways that aligned with "guided teacher practice", but may be inclined to work in this way more often in an effort to reflect contemporary policy aspirations. While participant teachers' practice was not 'revolutionised' as a direct consequence of education policy, it may have facilitated some teaching practices, such as teacher-guided practice, to feature more prominently than others did during research observations. Consonant with previous sections of this chapter, the relatively subtle ways in which participant teachers construed curriculum policy guidelines, and possibly other local and wider contextual factors, further illustrates the challenges of conducting educational research.

6.3.3.1 Section summary

This section presented contextual factors in two distinct 'layers': the local level was the immediate classroom and broader school setting and the wider level was the political expectations of educational policy. While acknowledging there may be more contextual influences within and between these distinct layers, this account aimed to represent the factors that the majority of participant teachers identified as influencing day-to-day classroom practice in physical education settings. These local and wider contextual factors, together with the nature of physical activities pursued with classes, appeared to influence classroom practice

by enabling some actions to feature more prominently and potentially constraining other actions during the research observations. A combination of these local and wider contextual factors appeared to shape the decisions participant teachers made about their classroom practice – matters encompassed within the ‘*what decides*’ element of the theoretical framework.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter has shown how teacher-pupil relationships play an integral role in the decisions participants teachers made about their classroom practice. The findings suggested that respect, familiarity, time, and context were at the ‘core’ of these relationships and informed the decisions participant teachers’ made about how to employ their broad repertoire of teaching approaches. An interplay of these four main factors, where they often combined in various and constantly changing ways, created the conditions for participant teachers to perform certain teaching practices more readily than they did others.

These findings prompted major revisions to the theoretical framework constructed during the observation phase of the present study. Sharing the theoretical framework during interviews and being prepared to accommodate the participant teachers’ views enabled a nuanced understanding of their classroom practice to emerge. Analysing interview transcripts about teacher-pupil relationships and delineating the main influences provided insight into the ‘what decides’ conundrum of participant teachers’ classroom practice. The theoretical framework was modified to account for these findings by adding a ‘what decides’ dimension to the existing ‘teacher-pupil power dynamic’ element of the framework. These relationships were difficult to trace during my observation work but are central to the practices of this group of teachers, illuminating the inherent strengths and limitations of research methods in educational settings. Therefore, the next chapter will explore further the merits of employing observation and interview research methods in a complementary fashion in this research study.

These findings also contribute to the physical education literature discussed in earlier chapters of this thesis. Preceding physical education literature suggests teaching styles and models provide a set of ‘tools’ and, if a teacher is cognisant with these ‘tools’, then he or she should be able to readily implement them in any situation. This chapter has argued, based on what the participants represented as teacher-pupil relationships, that teachers themselves often make sense of a wide range of influences with these acts of sense making enabling and constraining them to work in particular ways with classes. This realisation makes an important contribution to providing a ‘fresh’ conceptualisation of physical education teachers’ practice and will be discussed further in the subsequent chapter of this thesis.

The following, final chapter will not only discuss issues raised in the present chapter, but will also pull together key points from across Chapters 4, 5 and 6, to highlight the commonalities and contrasts with preceding research studies and demonstrate the extent to which this study has managed to present a ‘fresh’ interpretation of physical education teachers’ practice. Central to achieving this task will be the discussion of several key themes, which capture and draw together the main findings, and at the same time address the study’s research questions.

Chapter 7 – Discussion

7.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2, much unease was voiced over the fact that preceding research investigating teachers' classroom practices has largely been conducted in a dualistic fashion, concentrating either on reporting teachers' actions or on documenting the wider influences that inform and shape school life (LeCompte, 2009; Lee, 2003). Preceding research has also portrayed teachers' practices in ways that underplay the complex nature of classroom life (Rex *et al.*, 2006; Rovegno, 2009), with limited efforts made to present a 'fresh' interpretation to the profession. This final chapter, therefore, reflects upon what we can learn from the present study and considers the implications for future research and practice. The chapter aims chiefly to paint a more veridical picture of classroom life by presenting the dynamic accounts of teachers' practices captured in Chapters 4, 5, and 6. It also remains important to move beyond reporting teachers' actions in isolation, and start considering how contextual influences may inform and shape classroom practices.

The chapter is structured into two main sections. The first, more extensive, section considers the issues raised across Chapters 4, 5 and 6 to highlight commonalities and contrasts with the research literature presented in Chapter 2. Given the broad investigative scope of this study, a considerable number of 'findings' were reported in earlier chapters of this thesis. It would, therefore, not be possible in the space remaining to recount each of these 'findings' and then subject them individually to robust academic argument and debate. I would, also, argue that this minute level of analysis would frustrate the reader and he or she would get 'bogged-down' with the detail at a time where clarity of thought is required to grasp the larger themes emerging from this thesis. Accordingly, it seemed more productive for this section to capture some of these 'findings' by presenting the following seven key themes:

1. Learning from a sample of highly competent teachers: words of caution;
2. Striking a research methods balance: the potential of observations and interviews;
3. Patterns of interaction, dangers of misinterpretation;
4. Challenging and supporting 'direct' teaching;
5. (Re)conceptualising teaching as a highly dynamic enterprise;
6. Highly competent teachers: relationships as a shared consensus?
7. Expanding definitions of pedagogy: acknowledging the dynamic nature of teacher-pupil relationships.

These key themes encapsulate the central issues that emerged from my analysis of observation and interview data. Key themes 1-3 are largely methodological reflections to explore the potential strengths and possible limitations of the present study's findings; that is, these themes consider the interpretations and analysis offered in earlier chapters and the need for caution in generalising these findings. Key themes 4-7 are largely theoretical in nature. These theoretical themes provide a point of reference for comparison and contrast to relevant literature introduced in Chapter 2 and an opportunity to demonstrate the extent to which my research has managed to answer successfully the research questions posed in this thesis.

The second section of this chapter draws this thesis to a conclusion and suggests recommendations for future research and practice. Reflecting on these key themes provides an opportunity to judge whether this study has presented a 'fresh' interpretation of teachers' practice, along with pointing out major limitations and areas for potential future research.

I now turn to explore these seven themes, starting with a section entitled 'Learning from a sample of highly competent teachers: words of caution' to draw attention to the limitations of sampling in the present study.

7.2 Researching Teachers' Practice: Discussing the Key Themes from this Thesis

7.2.1 Learning from a sample of highly competent teachers: words of caution

The aim of the methodology chapter was to provide a detailed account of the research process and enable the reader to understand the decisions made during all stages of this study (Creswell, 2007; Denscombe, 2007; Mishler, 1990; Silverman, 2010). The level of detail provided – on the research procedures, my position as the researcher, the participants recruited and my relations with them, and my approach to data gathering and analysis – should provide the reader with insights into both the strengths and limitations of the present study. As the sub-title of this current section indicates, there are major points concerning sampling that I believe are in need of further discussion.

The methodology chapter has already explained the approach adopted for selecting 'appropriate' participants for this study. Two main areas of concern were in the foreground during the sampling process:

- I purposively selected participant teachers to provide opportunities to observe a range of 'key features' across the sample;
- I went to great lengths to identify and recruit 'effective' teachers of physical education.

It seems appropriate at this stage of the thesis to revisit these decisions and suggest that much caution is required when interpreting and generalising the findings of this study. Looking first at my desire to recruit teachers who individually displayed contrasting key features in their practice, the findings from my pilot study were a crucial part of this process. These exploratory observations in schools recognised initial key features for the patterns of classroom interaction identified in this study as teacher-directed, teacher-guided, pupil-initiated, and teacher-pupil negotiated practice. Using these key features as a guide, one aim of

my sampling efforts was to recruit teachers who individually displayed features in their practice that were distinct from those of other participants. Including diversity in patterns of classroom interaction across the sample was important so research observations could document and construct a broad theoretical framework to represent these practices.

The intent of this purposive approach to sampling was *not* to select participants to make generalisations to the wider population. We should, therefore, remain alert to the key features driving the selection of participants in this study and be wary of efforts to generalise the findings to the entire Scottish teaching profession or to other national contexts. Chapter 2 has already noted that the physical education literature routinely reports physical education teachers' practice as over-reliant on 'direct' teaching approaches (Bulger and Housner, 2009; Capel, 2007; Cothran and Kulinna, 2008; Curtner-Smith *et al.*, 2001; Hardman and Marshall, 2000, 2005; Kirk, 2010; Kulinna and Cothran, 2003; Pühse and Gerber, 2005), with few studies challenging these claims (Rovegno, 2009). Thus, a randomly selected sample of teachers from across Scotland might well have revealed a much narrower range of classroom interactions in comparison to those presented in Chapter 4. The aim of this study is to provide a 'fresh' interpretation of teachers' practice and I would argue the diversity across the sample increased the potential for uncovering a broader range of practices employed within physical education settings. While it is not possible to make direct comparisons between this study and the wider teaching profession, the integrated theoretical framework presented earlier may provide teachers with a point of reference to inform and supplement their existing practices.

Turning to the other concern in the sampling process relating to the selection of 'highly competent' teachers, the methodology section has already provided a rationale for this decision and explained the steps taken to gauge participants' professional competence. However, given the specific nature of this sample of teachers, it seems appropriate to restate briefly my decision to choose 'highly competent' teachers and reflect on the ramifications for interpreting the findings

of this study. Given that the research was interested in constructing a theoretical frame to explain teachers' practices, there was one major advantage in selecting highly competent teachers.

This advantage was the need to ensure the diverse range of classroom interactions captured during observations were emerging from participants with comparable levels of professional ability. Indeed, this purposive approach to sampling minimised the possibility for individual differences in teachers' professional abilities being a confounding influence on the different classroom interactions captured by the theoretical framework. I would argue that this sampling distinction is important as it enhances the credibility of the findings and increases the overall potential for this study to impact physical education teachers' practices.

Incidentally, another advantage, identified during the analysis of interview data, was that these highly competent teachers appeared to share a degree of commonality in relation to their construal of classroom practice. A discussion of the similarities in how these teachers appeared to make decisions about their practice is provided in a later section entitled 'highly competent teachers: relationships as a shared consensus?'

Over and above the advantages of this approach to sampling, these decisions have restricted this study from making any bold claims about teaching in physical education settings. For instance, in line with the comparisons made in Chapter 2 between 'expert' and 'novice' teachers (Borko and Livingston, 1989; Byra and Sherman, 1993; Sabers *et al.*, 1991; Schempp *et al.*, 2002; Earl and Timperley, 2014; Le Fevre *et al.*, 2016; Timperley, 2011), it is quite possible that these highly competent teachers have different capabilities in comparison to teachers with lower competency levels. More specifically, the highly competent teachers in the present study may have a broader repertoire of teaching approaches, and a different approach to the decisions they make about classroom practice, in comparison to teachers with lower competency levels. Therefore, we must apply considerable caution in generalising the findings drawn from a sample of highly competent teachers to the wider teaching profession.

7.2.2 *Striking a research methods balance: the potential of observations and interviews*

Staying on the broad topic of methodology, an important aim of this thesis was to move beyond many existing research studies, which have tended to report details of teachers' classroom practices in a dualistic fashion (LeCompte, 2009; Lee, 2003). The current study has attempted to bridge this research divide by considering the actions of teachers and pupils in the classroom while acknowledging the wider contexts where these educational activities take place. This research aim may seem relatively simple in principle, but it was *not* a straightforward matter for data collection at a practical level.

Chapter 2 recognised a number of challenges confronting researchers in educational settings. Chief among these challenges was the task of capturing the “complex”, “diverse”, and highly “individualistic” nature of teaching and learning (LeCompte, 2009). A further, related challenge confronting researchers was that existing theoretical and methodological frameworks might be too underdeveloped at present to cope with the inherently ‘messy’ nature of educational settings (Ovens *et al.*, 2013). It is understandable, therefore, that preceding accounts of classroom practice have tended to reduce the complexity in education settings by either reporting teachers' actions and overlooking the discourses and influences on these practices, or reporting the prevailing discourses and influences and ignoring the details of classroom action (LeCompte, 2009; Lee, 2003).

Despite these challenges, the present study aimed to engage openly with the complex nature of educational settings. Adopting this broad investigative stance was a crucial, and at times frustrating, part of moving away from the dualistic accounts of teachers' practice frequently reported in the educational literature. The methodology chapter identified the qualitative research methods of observation *and* interviews as key for making some sense of teachers' actions in the classroom and the contextual influences that informed and shaped these practices. I collected data in this way partly by observing the actions and contextual influences as

teachers and pupils worked together in school settings, and partly, by interviewing teachers to ask for their thoughts on observation findings and the wider contextual influences shaping these practices. This is not to suggest that observation and interview research methods conquered the challenges set out by LeCompte (2009) and Ovens *et al.* (2013). Indeed, when readers interpret the theoretical themes presented in later sections of this chapter, it should be borne in mind that these research methods did not *fully* capture the complexity at play across the participant teachers' practices nor did they *completely* unravel the 'messy' nature of educational settings.

It will be recalled, however, that the methodology chapter was at pains to demonstrate how these research 'tools' were carefully adapted and employed to address the specific demands of the current study. In other words, it would have been unwise to use observations and interviews in an uncritical, lift-off-the-shelf, manner to gather data in complex and 'messy' educational settings. In passing, two main points are worth noting. Firstly, using the term 'pedagogy' as a heuristic device and developing several sensitizing concepts were fruitful ways to focus data gathering during observation and interview phases of the study. Secondly, viewing observation and interview research methods as generating *equally valuable* sources of data enabled this study to use them in a complementary fashion. In other words, the initial observation phase of the research helped to contextualise and inform the later interview phase; the later interview phase of the research enabled exploration of the theoretical framework constructed during initial observations.

During the interview phase of the research, I became well aware of the ways in which employing research methods in a complementary way enhanced the overall quality of the findings. For example, Chapter 6 used interview data to report the relatively subtle ways in which participant teachers construed some contextual factors in relation to their day-to-day practice. One might have expected current curriculum policy guidelines to feature prominently, but participant teachers reported a more modest effect on their practice. A major challenge for the research

observations carried out as part of the present study was the difficulty in identifying how, if at all, teachers were construing various contextual factors in *direct* relation to their day-to-day practices. Interviews provided an opportunity for participant teachers to explain thoroughly the ways in which contextual factors came to influence their day-to-day practice.

Chapter 6 provided another example of the complementary relations between these research methods, particularly in reporting interview data relating to teacher-pupil relationships. The ethical commitments placed on the present study confined any observations of classes to take place several weeks after consent forms were distributed to teachers and pupils. Consequently, by the time I arranged any observations in schools, these were often with classes that participants had worked with for an extended period. Therefore, aligning with Ball (1980), there was time for participant teachers to establish a relationship with these classes in advance of any observations taking place and the notion of teacher-pupil relations featured less prominently in this phase of the research. However, with interviews providing an opportunity to explore the framework derived from observations, the matter of teacher-pupil relationships, as reported in Chapter 6, became a more prominent feature in the latter phases of the study.

These examples serve to illustrate how employing interviews as a research method helped to widen out the findings garnered from research observations and, consequently, enhanced the overall quality of the theoretical framework. However, the methodology chapter uncovered a final and less obvious, but still highly pertinent, challenge for educational researchers. This final challenge relates to the apparent inability of educational researchers to transcend their own personal preferences for adopting particular research methods. In pursuing qualitatively driven research designs, similar to that adopted in the present study, the methodology chapter revealed a historical tension between observation and interview research methods. While these historical debates aimed to advance observation *or* interviews as superior in nature, this legacy has tended to constrain present day researchers to have a strong allegiance to *one* of these research

methods (Atkinson and Coffey, 2002; Atkinson *et al.*, 2003; Delamont, 2012a, b; Robson, 2011; Silverman, 2010). Giving more thought to the adaptation of research methods to suit the research task, and acknowledging the complementary nature of observations and interviews, could provide a means to bridge the dualism identified in the preceding educational research literature.

7.2.3 *Patterns of interaction, dangers of misinterpretation*

This final section in the discussion of methodological themes draws attention to a major issue for the present study relating to the organisation and categorisation of qualitative research data. While there are no universally accepted guidelines for making sense of qualitative data (Punch, 2009; Silverman, 2010), the methodology chapter explained the tendency for studies to organise research data into conceptual categories in a particular way. This popular categorisation process involves using a clear set of rules to define the boundaries of each category and, therefore, guiding the decisions made about the data assigned to individual categories (Charmaz, 2014; Dey, 1999). It will be recalled, however, that the current study adopted a somewhat different approach to categorise the bulk of research data in comparison to many preceding studies using qualitative research designs. A danger for the current study is that moving away from the commonly adopted approach to categorising qualitative data may lead to misinterpretations of the research findings and, therefore, misconceptions of the participant teachers' practices. There are several points concerning the categorisation of research data in this thesis that I would like to restate here to ensure misinterpretations of the findings do not happen.

The methodology chapter has already recognised the inherent limitations of the commonly adopted approach to data categorisation and I argued that:

...presenting clear rules to define what is 'in' and 'out' of a category in a quest for certainty is a deep-rooted trait of Western research...clear rules not only increase margins for error in a category, but they also fail to acknowledge the possibility for diversity in a category (p. 138).

Given that past work has tended to organise research data by using clear rules to define the boundaries of conceptual categories, but has given relatively limited attention to the possibility for variation within categories, this appeared an inappropriate way to categorise data in general and the observation data gathered for this thesis in particular. Looking for an alternate approach to categorise the observation data was crucial for this study to first preserve, and then represent, the diversity captured in the participant teachers' practices. It seems important to centre this section of the discussion chapter on considering how the conceptual categories identified as teacher-directed, teacher-guided, pupil-led, pupil-initiated, and teacher-pupil negotiated practice *preserved* the diverse patterns of classroom interaction identified during research observations. These conceptual categories aim to represent the participant teachers' day-to-day practices in the classroom and priority is afforded to them in this section, as they may be more liable to misinterpretation.

Rather than relying on a clear set of rules to define the boundaries for the five conceptual categories identified as teacher-directed, teacher-guided, pupil-led, pupil-initiated, and teacher-pupil negotiated practice, I created a "prototype" for each one of these categories (Dey, 1999). Chapter 4 has already presented these five conceptual categories in their prototype form. At the risk of oversimplification, the process of creating these prototype categories involved three key steps during the latter stages of data analysis:

1. I reviewed the broad range of focused codes identified for each of these five categories;
2. I narrowed down the essential features that were most representative of each category;
3. I used open memos to compare constantly the focused codes with the emerging prototype categories and the prototype categories to on-going research observations in teachers' classes.

Narrowing down the essential features of prototype categories was important for identifying the “splitting” points (Dey, 1993) between the *different* ways teachers were working with the pupils in their day-to-day practice. According to Dey (1999), creating conceptual categories in this way enables the researcher to assign data based on the degree of “family resemblance” to a prototype category. In other words, I could assign data to these prototypes if a teacher was interacting with pupils in accordance with these central defining features, rather than he or she having to satisfy every detail from an extensive list of criteria associated with strict definitions of a category.

This distinction was crucial for the present study. It allowed for a fully representative account of participants’ classroom practices, more akin to the picture presented by Tinning (2010) in Chapter 2: “...teachers seldom employ pedagogical methods in a pristine fashion...they will usually teach with more of a hybrid method – a bit of this, a bit of that” (p. 44). Therefore, adopting this alternative approach to data categorisation simultaneously enabled me to acknowledge the different ways teachers interacted with the pupils during their day-to-day practice while allowing scope for variation within each of these distinct practices.

The aim of this section has been to remind readers about the alternative approach adopted to categorise the bulk of research data and to obviate the possibility for misinterpreting the research findings of this thesis. I foresee the possibility for misinterpretation of the research findings in two main ways. One misinterpretation could be that the participant teachers performed these five conceptual categories in accordance with a strict definition for each category. Another, related misinterpretation could be that participant teachers have a limited teaching repertoire and can only interact with pupils in five possible ways.

To guard against the kind of misinterpretations set out in the preceding paragraph, it should be borne in mind that participant teachers were capable of shifting their practice *within* and *across* each of these conceptual categories; this capability

provided scope for them to work with pupils in highly varied ways. I hope this study provides future researchers with insights into the categorisation process and offers guidance for preserving diverse patterns of classroom interaction.

7.2.4 Challenging and supporting ‘direct’ teaching

Turning to consider theoretical themes, this section returns to the findings reported in Chapters 4 and 5 to make comparisons and contrasts to the literature about teachers’ practices introduced in Chapter 2. As the sub-title for this section indicates, my attention focuses specifically on the ways in which the findings of the present study challenge and support the claims that teachers’ practices are over-reliant on forms of ‘direct’ teaching. However, before engaging with the main thrust of this section, it seems appropriate to offer the following two caveats for a reader to guide his or her expectations for, and interpretations of, the discussion in subsequent paragraphs.

The first caveat is a reminder that a key objective of the present study was to depart from a major trend in preceding research, which has tended to report teachers’ actions in a narrow fashion and in isolation from any reasoning and contextual influences informing classroom practices. I am, therefore, eager to stress that readers of this thesis should interpret the issues raised about the participant teachers’ practices in this section in close correspondence with the remaining theoretical themes presented in subsequent sections of this chapter.

The other caveat is that I acknowledge these five framing categories constructed from observation data are not necessarily ‘new’ ways that teachers can work with the pupils in their classes. Therefore, I do not intend here to rigorously compare and contrast the theoretical framework I presented in Chapter 4 of this thesis to that of the Spectrum of Teaching Styles (Mosston, 1972) or the literature advancing various curriculum and instructional models (Metzler, 2011; Tannehill *et al.*, 2014). Two following sections of this chapter – ‘(Re)conceptualising teaching as a highly dynamic enterprise’ and ‘Highly competent teachers:

relationships as a shared consensus?’ – provide insight into the ways in which the findings of this thesis supersede Mosston’s work and more recent theorising about MBP by considering the *manner* in which participant teachers performed these five framing categories in the classroom.

Meantime, it will be recalled from Chapter 2 that the literature has presented a largely restricted account of teachers’ capabilities in the classroom. The general education literature has presented a view of classroom teaching operating in isolation from any reasoning, purpose, or contextual matters (Alexander, 1994; LeCompte, 2009). In addition, physical education literature has routinely reported practices across the world as over-reliant on ‘direct’ teaching approaches (Bulger and Housner, 2009; Capel, 2007; Cothran and Kulinna, 2008; Curtner-Smith *et al.*, 2001; Hardman and Marshall, 2000, 2005; Kirk, 2010; Kulinna and Cothran, 2003; Pühse and Gerber, 2005). It was, therefore, unsurprising to report that teacher-directed practice was a part of the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 4. Indeed, this teacher-directed form of interaction appeared to play an important role in these teachers’ classroom practice.

Having completed 88 lesson observations in physical education settings, I would argue there were situations where it would have been highly inappropriate if these teachers had not worked in a teacher-directed way during parts of some lessons. The interview comments of participants presented in Chapter 6 corroborate this claim where certain physical activities, (or certain skills and events within activities), may ‘override’ a teacher’s ability to be reciprocal and interactive with pupils at all times. Therefore, rather than perceiving this finding in a negative light, this study suggests that forms of direct teaching were a key part of participant teachers’ day-to-day practices and are a *bona fide* way of working with pupils in the classroom.

It is striking to note that Chapters 4 and 5 reported pupil-led practice as a major part of four participant teachers’ practices. These findings contrast markedly with existing literature reporting physical education teachers’ overuse of ‘direct’

teaching approaches (Bulger and Housner, 2009; Capel, 2007; Cothran and Kulinna, 2008; Curtner-Smith *et al.*, 2001; Hardman and Marshall, 2000, 2005; Kirk, 2010; Kulinna and Cothran, 2003; Pühse and Gerber, 2005). I acknowledge that Chapter 2 did uncover some forms of pupil-led practices in existing physical education literature. There were examples of teachers providing opportunities for pupils to ‘take responsibility’ via the ‘reciprocal’ and ‘self-check’ styles (Byra, 2006), the ‘cooperative learning’ model (Dyson, 2001; 2002; Dyson and Casey, 2012), and the ‘sport education’ model (Brunton, 2003; Hastie, 1996; 1998; Kinchin, 2006). However, many of these studies were specific research interventions, carefully designed by researchers and implemented by teachers, to investigate the benefits and challenges of these pupil-led approaches often in comparison to the status quo. With few studies investigating teachers’ practice in a naturalistic fashion (Rovegno, 2009), I was unable to find research studies documenting teachers using pupil-led approaches in naturally occurring situations. Therefore, this study provides considerable insight not only into the possibilities for teachers to work in pupil-led ways as part of their everyday practice, but also into the patterns of interaction associated with this approach to help guide and inspire teachers’ future practices.

In addition to teacher-directed and pupil-led practices, Chapter 4 noted that there were instances of teacher-guided, teacher-pupil negotiated and pupil-initiated practices. Chapter 5 reported participants were performing three, four, or even all five of the framing categories, suggesting that these teachers have a *broader repertoire* of teaching approaches than is currently conveyed in the research literature. While I acknowledged the challenges of documenting the regularity of these categories during my observation work (see pp. 110-111), making notes about this enabled me to suggest that these forms of practice featured in the practices of this group of teachers with a similar degree of regularity in comparison to each other.

Recognising the middle ground between the teacher ‘in charge’ and the pupils ‘taking on responsibility’ via teacher-guided, teacher-pupil negotiated, and pupil-

initiated practices, was a crucial part of mapping the ‘grey area’ that exists between these two perspectives. A straightforward, but highly important, feature of participant teachers having a broad repertoire of approaches was that it departed from presenting practice in physical education settings in strict black and white terms. In other words, a binary position would leave pupil-led approaches as the only alternate mode of practice when making recommendations to challenge the overuse of ‘direct’ teaching in physical education settings. I have already explained my own (reflexive) position in relation to this binary in the methodology chapter and the implications of switching from ‘direct’ teaching to pupil-led approaches:

I eschew the indiscriminate critique leveled at direct teaching approaches and question the wholesale adoption of pupil led approaches. Instead, I see the relevance of all these approaches [teacher-directed, teacher-guided, teacher-pupil negotiated, pupil-initiated and pupil-led practices] as part of a teacher’s pedagogical repertoire so they can meet the diverse challenges of day-to-day life in the classroom (p. 130).

I maintain the stance adopted in the preceding quotation and contend that reporting participant teachers’ practices either as the teacher ‘in charge’ or as the pupils ‘taking on responsibility’ did not seem to represent adequately the complex and dynamic picture of classroom life captured in this study.

7.2.4.1 Section summary

The findings discussed in this current section appear to locate the participant teachers’ practices in a curious position in comparison to preceding physical education literature. On the one hand, these teachers appear to particularly employ ‘direct’ teaching when situations ‘override’ the possibility of working in more interactive ways and, on the other hand, they employ a far broader repertoire of teaching approaches that transcend the more limited capabilities of teachers portrayed in the physical education literature.

The points raised in this section make a major contribution to answering research question 1:

What are the key features of these physical education teachers' day-to-day actions in the classroom?

The next section will make additional points in response to this question, but as a central finding, the broad repertoire of teaching approaches that this thesis has revealed – teacher-directed, teacher-guided, teacher-pupil negotiated, pupil-initiated, and pupil-led practices – has thrown much needed light on the key features of classroom practice. This broad repertoire of teaching approaches, alongside insights discussed in later sections of this chapter, aim to present a more veridical account of classroom life. These classroom interactions may provide directions for practising teachers to pursue and present insights for policy makers to consider when setting out recommendations for future practice.

7.2.5 *(Re)conceptualising teaching as a highly dynamic enterprise*

The preceding section concluded that the five framing categories comprising the theoretical framework, to a degree at least, challenged existing claims of 'direct' teaching dominating practice in physical education settings. However, I recognise a *major* risk associated with foregrounding these five framing categories of classroom practice in this discussion chapter. The risk is that *if* these five framing categories are foregrounded, then any wider issues and concerns that enable or constrain teachers' deployment of these practices may be relegated to the back of a reader's mind.

Given that Chapter 2 voiced concerns that much preceding literature has sketched out a relatively straightforward picture of classroom practice, and a largely restrictive account of teachers' professional capabilities, moving beyond a narrowly focused interpretation of the framing categories seems like a crucial step at this point of the thesis. Accordingly, I now move to integrate the patterns of

classroom interaction captured in this study with the purposes and contextual influences that appeared to frame the deployment of these practices.

Despite the apparently ‘messy’ and ‘complex’ nature of educational settings (LeCompte, 2009; Ovens *et al.*, 2013), studies drawing upon process-product designs still dominate the research landscape (Rex *et al.*, 2006). It is understandable that classroom practice is often reduced to a “using method X to enable students to achieve Y” perspective (Alexander, 2008, p. 30). It remains important to avoid these linear and over-simplistic interpretations of teachers’ practice in this section by recapitulating some of the wider issues and concerns that appeared to guide participant teachers’ deployment of the five framing categories. Chapter 5 provided much insight into the *manner* in which participant teachers employed their repertoire of approaches during their day-to-day practice.

Chapter 5 has described how participants managed to work with classes in varied ways, but a more nuanced picture of their classroom practice emerged by recognising that these teachers’ actions were *not* performed in a ‘simple’ or mechanistic fashion. Analysing observation fieldnotes and informal talk with these teachers revealed they carefully *enacted* this repertoire of teaching approaches by ‘fine-tuning’ practice in advance of lessons, ‘responding’ to situations in the immediate act of teaching, and ‘negotiating and controlling’ the goals and learning intentions for a lesson or series of lessons with the pupils.

Looking first at the ‘fine-tuned’ and ‘responsive’ features identified in Chapter 5, there are distinct parallels here to the qualities associated with ‘expert’ and ‘reflective’ teaching reviewed on p. 29. One can view these features as forming part of a recursive cycle. Participant teachers alertness to the needs and abilities of the pupils in their classes led them to ‘fine-tune’ lessons and be ‘responsive’. In turn, acting in these ways can be seen as heightening their awareness to the pupils’ needs and led them to adapt teaching options carefully in flexible ways to match unfolding classroom situations.

Shifting to another feature of practice reported in Chapter 5, participant teachers used forms of ‘negotiation and control’ to shape the goals and learning intentions for a lesson or series of lessons with the pupils. Research observations recognised that when a teacher and a pupil or pupils come together in a class, there are often implicit and/or explicit goals and learning intentions that the teacher sets out to achieve. Similar to the findings of the interactionist research reported in Chapter 2 (Delamont, 1983; Andy Hargreaves, 1978; David Hargreaves, 1975, 1978; Woods, 1980a, b; 1983), the clear expression of any goals or learning intentions by a participant teacher were *not* always enough for the pupils to accept and then work actively to achieve these aspirations in a lesson. Key to understanding the dynamic nature of these teacher-pupil interactions is to recognise the unequal, but not wholly asymmetric, power differential displayed between the teacher and the pupils in the current study (David Hargreaves, 1975).

Consonant with previous studies adopting an interactionist stance, research observations identified a range of strategies – asserting authority, persuasion, moral appeals, incentives, and open negotiation – used by teachers to cope with the unstable nature of classroom interaction and enhance the likelihood of pursuing certain learning intentions and modes of practice with classes (Andy Hargreaves, 1978; Woods, 1980a, b, 1983). Recognising forms of negotiation and control as a major part of day-to-day practice challenges the ‘clear-cut’ nature of the popular ‘X achieves Y’ perspective and the assumption that pupils engage with, rather than actively resist, a teacher’s choice of method and learning activities in the classroom. Therefore, despite the concerns I expressed in Chapter 2 about interactionist research “going out of fashion” (Delamont, 1983), it can be seen that these studies are still of value in (re)interpreting present day secondary school classrooms.

7.2.5.1 Section summary

In reviewing the features of classroom practice detailed in preceding paragraphs, a chief conclusion to close this section relates to the *manner* in which participant

teachers employed these five framing categories in the classroom. Considering the ‘fine-tuned’ and ‘responsive’ features of Chapter 5, alongside the potentially unstable nature of teacher-pupil interaction, leads me to claim that this thesis has revealed a quite different, ‘fresh’ interpretation of classroom life in comparison to other contemporaneous accounts in the literature. Indeed, the three key features discussed in this section – ‘fine-tuning’, ‘responsiveness’, and ‘negotiation and control’ – can be seen as centrally addressing research question 1:

What are the key features of these physical education teachers’ day-to-day actions in the classroom?

It can be argued that it was not possible for participant teachers to implement their teaching repertoire straightforwardly, but rather they *enacted* this repertoire in flexible ways. This account was evidenced by reporting the ways in which this group of teachers considered the appropriateness of their practice in relation to the needs and abilities of pupils, together with negotiating and controlling a workable definition of the classroom. On the topic of participant teachers enacting their teaching repertoire within dynamic classroom settings, it seems appropriate at this point to return briefly to an observation made in the preceding section.

It will be recalled that an earlier section conceded the five framing categories alone had not managed to supersede Mosston’s work or recent MBP developments. There is a danger that readers start to question whether this thesis makes sufficient contributions to knowledge in the physical education literature. While this study may not have uncovered a greater number of teaching options in comparison to Mosston and the MBP literature, it has captured the key features of practice as they orchestrate these framing categories in *dynamic* classroom settings. It can be argued that this dynamic account of teaching supersedes the work of Mosston and the MBP literature by challenging their straightforward interpretations of classroom life.

7.2.6 *Highly competent teachers: relationships as a shared consensus?*

It seems appropriate to claim, on the basis of the close analysis of their interview transcripts, that the participant teachers held a shared consensus about ‘relationships’ with pupils and a common set of factors was identified as influencing the *decisions* teachers make about their classroom practice. Respect, familiarity, time, and context were at the ‘core’ of these relationships and appeared to inform the decisions participant teachers’ made about how to employ their broad repertoire of teaching approaches. Recognising that participants made conscious decisions about their practice may seem to be overstating a relatively simple point, but this is *not* a trivial matter. Tracking the ways in which these relationships informed participant teachers’ practice challenges the largely restricted accounts of teachers’ capabilities in the classroom and the notion of teaching styles and models as a set of ‘tools’ that are simply implemented in practice (Rovegno, 2009; Tinning, 2010) and in isolation from any wider issues or contextual influences (LeCompte, 2009).

An earlier section has explained my reasons for choosing a sample of highly competent teachers and the need for much caution in generalising the findings of this study. One might argue that these relationships, and the ways in which these relations inform practice, are capabilities unique to highly competent teachers and offer limited insight for the general teaching profession. On the contrary, I would argue there is much to be gained from highlighting the views of these highly competent teachers given that contemporary research has shifted away from exploring the value of relationships for classroom practice (Pianta, 1999).

Crucially, while Chapter 6 presented the main factors influencing these relationships – respect, familiarity, time, and context – singly for clarity of exposition, it should be borne in mind that these factors appeared to combine in overlapping and constantly changing ways. A dynamic interchange exists between these four main factors and this interplay created situations where participant teachers decided to perform certain teaching practices more readily than they did

others. Therefore, Chapter 6 revealed participant teachers were not only making decisions about their classroom practice, but these judgements were made against the highly dynamic and constantly changing backdrop of school and classroom life. One interpretation could be that this backdrop creates the type of non-routine and unpredictable environment recognised earlier by Hoyle and John (1995), demanding forms of “professional knowledge” and “professional practice” to decide on appropriate courses of action. Given that this study has revealed the ever-changing dynamics of classroom settings, and the adaptability in participants’ thinking and actions in these settings, I would argue a more appreciative interpretation of teachers’ professional capabilities has emerged in comparison to much preceding education and physical education literature.

My interpretation of the features of classroom practice, detailed in preceding paragraphs, led me to conclude that participant teachers appeared to make sense of a wide range of potential influences on their classroom practice. In fact, I feel reasonably confident in claiming that participant teachers’ practices in the classroom and their understanding of wider contextual influences connect in a largely synergistic fashion. Take, as one example, the interview extracts presented earlier in Chapter 6, where participant teachers explained the ways in which they construed current curriculum policy guidelines in Scotland. Rather than policy guidelines having a ‘revolutionary’ influence on day-to-day practice, these teachers explained their more ‘evolutionary’ effects by placing more emphasis on certain existing features of their classroom practices.

Contrastingly, the review of education and physical education research literature in Chapter 2 was at pains to demonstrate the dualism that exists between research conducted *in* education and research conducted *on* schools and educational phenomena more generally (LeCompte, 2009; Lee, 2003). Following Alexander’s (1994) lead, I was concerned with the potentially negative consequences of reporting teachers’ actions in the classroom in isolation from the wider influences that may inform and shape these practices. In Chapter 2, I explained the following point:

Contemporary accounts of classroom practice tend to reflect only one-half of this divide; this involves either reporting teachers' actions and overlooking discourses and influences, or reporting the discourses and influences and foregoing the details of classroom actions. Therefore, these findings present a doubly incomplete picture of classroom practice and mask the potential for teachers' actions and these wider influences to be synergistically connected (p. 18).

My contention is that this “doubly incomplete picture” presents an overly technical and restricted interpretation of teachers' professional capabilities. Research conducted *in* education can at times suggest teachers implement practices straightforwardly without the need to make sense of any wider contextual influences. Research conducted *on* schools and educational phenomena suggests that a range of wider contextual influences strongly dominate school life with limited scope for teachers to challenge and transform these ideas in relation to their day-to-day practice. Consonant with the views of symbolic interactionism presented in Chapter 3 (Blumer, 1969), the participant teachers in this present study appeared to demonstrate capabilities to interpret prevalent discourses and wider contextual influences and construe these in relation to their own teaching practice.

7.2.6.1 Section summary

This section has recapped the main findings from Chapter 6 and observed that participant teachers held a shared consensus about ‘relationships’ and these relations appeared to inform the decisions made about their classroom practices. The common set of factors at the core of these relationships – respect, familiarity, time, and context – emerged as I set about answering research question 2:

What are the purposes and contextual influences that inform and shape these physical education teachers' practices?

This thesis has shown respect, familiarity, and time, alongside local and wider contextual influences, were at the ‘core’ of these relationships. Reporting an interactive ‘mix’ between these factors demonstrates that teaching is a far more

complex enterprise than suggested in many research studies. Accordingly, a more nuanced interpretation of participant teachers' professional capabilities has emerged from answering research question 2. Indeed, recognising these teachers' sense-making capacities in relation to the purposes and contextual influences shaping their practices, makes a valuable contribution to the work of bridging the dualism identified in the literature.

7.2.7 Expanding definitions of pedagogy: acknowledging the dynamic nature of teacher-pupil relationships

This final section dedicated to the discussion of theoretical themes revisits the definition of 'pedagogy' used to guide the current research study. Building upon the insights into teachers' practices gained through this study, I argue that there is a need to modify Alexander's (2008b) definition of pedagogy by placing a much stronger emphasis on the dynamic and reciprocal nature of teacher-pupil relationships.

The desire to investigate teachers' day-to-day practice led me to employ the term 'pedagogy' to guide the research process. A rationale for my decision to make explicit use of this term was that it provided the potential for capturing a "bigger picture" interpretation of participant teachers' practice in this thesis (Alexander, 2008a, p. 1). The merits of a number of definitions of pedagogy, which were reviewed in Chapter 2 and grouped into three main 'camps', were considered as possible options to guide this current research study. Robin Alexander's (2008b) definition offered an apposite perspective on pedagogy and provided my study with a number of guiding principles for investigating teachers' classroom practice. My study, however, employed these principles in a way that captured a fine-grained account of classroom life. The findings from my study provide a much closer analysis of the micro-interactions that take place in school classrooms than can be found in much of the recent literature. On the basis of this analysis, the thesis has sought to capture key features of highly competent teachers' practice as they deploy a range of strategies to bring their pedagogy to life. Accordingly, I

would argue that there is value in incorporating central insights gained from this study into an expanded version of Alexander's (2008b) definition of pedagogy.

Before discussing an expansion of Alexander's work, it is helpful to recap on the contribution his work has made to this thesis. First, I restate his definition and then I offer three important general observations. According to Alexander (2008b) pedagogy is:

...the observable act of teaching together with its attendant discourse of educational theories, values, evidence and justifications. It is what one needs to know, and the skills one needs to command, in order to make and justify the many different kinds of decisions of which teaching is constituted (p. 29).

I found that Alexander's work contributed to this study in the following ways:

1. Alexander's (2008a) notion of the "bigger picture" (p. 1) helped my own thinking, analysis and data gathering efforts shift towards a representation of classroom practice as a thoughtfully driven process.
2. The two complementary frameworks elaborating Alexander's (2008b) definition – "pedagogy as ideas" (p. 29) and "pedagogy as practice" (p. 30) – each correspond with a different half of the dichotomy recognised in the literature by LeCompte (2009) and Lee (2003). The following paragraphs set out how I have built on this strong foundation.
3. Alexander's definition highlights the synergies that exist between "pedagogy as ideas" and "pedagogy as practice". Recognising that 'ideas-inform-practice-and-practice-informs-ideas' inspired my desire to track participants' sense-making processes and the ways in which wider discourses and contextual influences were construed in relation to their classroom practice.

I would argue there is a need to provide a more explicit account of what Alexander's definition actually looks like in practice and the following question remains:

What are the key features of practice that teachers might need to exhibit to pursue this form of pedagogy in the classroom?

My study has provided a fine-grained account of classroom interaction and has presented key insights about how teachers *and* pupils participate in classroom situations. Indeed, Chapter 6 has shown how the reciprocal and dynamic nature of teacher-pupil relationships entails that pupils, to a degree at least, as well as teachers inform the decisions made about classroom practice. Drawing on the key features of ‘negotiation’ and ‘responsiveness’, the following paragraphs will provide an outline sketch of the flexible nature of participant teachers’ practices. These key features provide important insights into the ways in which the teachers in my study managed to solve continually a range of challenges associated with these reciprocal relationships.

A range of related strategies, including ‘negotiation’, were central to understanding interaction in the classrooms that featured in this study. These classroom actions were more akin to the ‘pseudo’ position outlined by David Hargreaves (1975), whereby the definition of the situation for a teacher and pupils is not always in perfect alignment. My observation work documented participant teachers orchestrating the power dynamic that exists between teachers and pupils. To achieve a ‘common’ perspective of learning intentions, participant teachers readily employed a range of negotiation strategies – persuasion, incentives, asserting authority, and moral appeals – to get pupils ‘on board’ with the goals and learning intentions for a lesson. However, the participant teachers also displayed a willingness to consult with the pupils in their classes and, using a form of open negotiation, there were frequent encounters where they managed to establish a ‘shared’ perspective of the goals and learning intentions for lessons. Therefore, while the present study observed myriad examples of pupils engaging with the goals and learning intentions for classes, this behaviour was *not* without much endeavour on the part of participant teachers. Tracing the key feature of ‘negotiation’ in this study illuminates how teachers cope with the reciprocal nature of these relationships in the classroom.

Turning the spotlight on ‘responsiveness’, findings reported in Chapter 5 revealed that participant teachers made concerted efforts to respond flexibly to unfolding events in the classroom. These classroom actions were analogous to the ‘adaptive’ qualities outlined earlier by Timperley and colleagues (2016, 2011), and Entwistle and Walker (2000), whereby teachers are capable of recognising when routine ways of working become redundant and need to be significantly revised in the immediate act of teaching. Crucially, Chapter 5 reported that participant teachers’ personal commitments to meeting the needs, and an alertness to the abilities, of the pupils, coupled with the skill of adapting ways of working during the act of teaching, were central to understanding the practices captured in this study. Therefore, the key feature of ‘responsiveness’ provides insight into the ways in which these teachers’ practices were not ‘fixed’ in nature, but rather appeared to be continually evaluated during the act of teaching and revised to create relevant learning experiences in the classroom.

These two key features of practice – negotiation and responsiveness – bring into sharp focus the nature of the relationships that prevailed in this study. This negotiated and responsive account of classroom life illuminates how teachers *and* pupils can simultaneously shape classroom practices. Given that pupil agency patterned the participants’ practices, to a degree at least, there is the possibility for unpredictable situations to arise during lessons. The key features of negotiation and responsiveness reported in this study show how these teachers were not simply implementing ways of working during lessons, but rather were interactively responding to, and shaping, the ever-changing dynamics in the classroom.

As summarised in Figure 7-1, interweaving the key features of ‘negotiation’ and ‘responsiveness’ with Alexander’s ‘ideas’ and ‘practice’ frameworks, seems to be an important step towards understanding how teachers can foster productive relationships for learning.

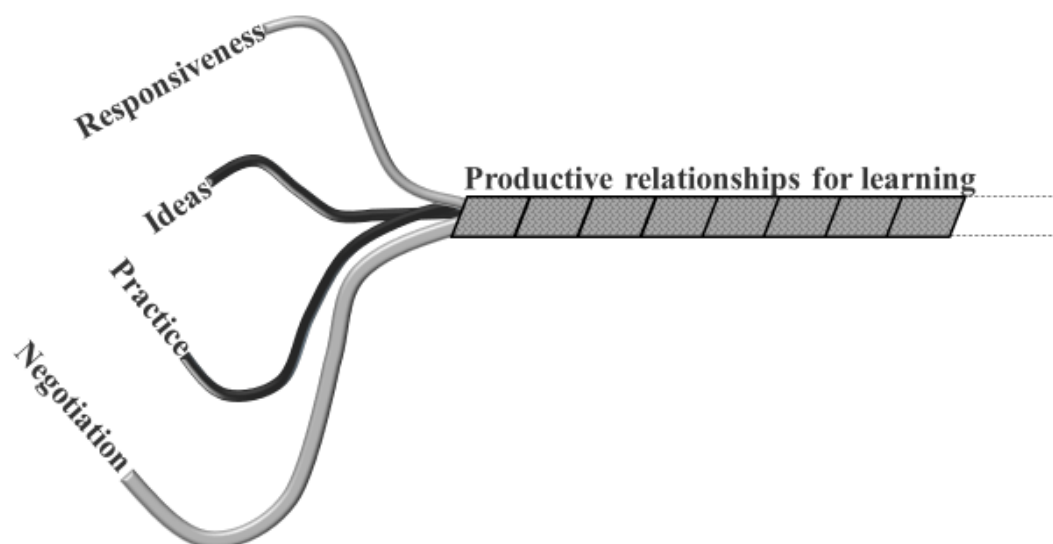


Figure 7-1: The Interwoven Nature of Pedagogy in the Classroom

Based on the findings of my study, it could be argued that Alexander's (2008b) definition does not give due weight to pupil agency, or indeed, teachers' efforts to cope with the changeable nature of these relationships in the classroom. Making a similar critique of the physical education literature, the dominant way of thinking about practice, influenced by Mosston's work, can also be seen as giving insufficient attention to pedagogical '*relationships*' in physical education classes. Chapter 2 argued that these interpretations of classroom reality, where teachers straightforwardly implement methods or styles or models as part of their practice, present an over-simplistic view of teacher-pupil relationships and, in turn, the act of teaching in education and physical education settings. A major contribution of this thesis has been to place on centre stage a number of key features of practice, which highlight the dynamic nature of pedagogical relationships, thereby making a useful correction to straightforward ways of thinking about practice.

I suggest there is a need to expand existing definitions of pedagogy to acknowledge explicitly this dynamic form of relationship that exists between teachers and pupils. Accordingly, I propose the following expansion to Robin Alexander's definition of pedagogy:

Pedagogy is the observable act of teaching together with its attendant discourse of educational theories, values, evidence and justifications. It is what one needs to know, and the skills one needs to command, in order to make and justify the many different kinds of decisions of which **responsive, interactive teaching is constituted to foster productive relationships for learning.**

A cursory glance at the expansion offered in the immediately preceding passage may suggest to some readers that it only makes a minor contribution to Alexander's definition. This contribution, however, is *not* a small matter for practice. The addition to Alexander's definition makes explicit the importance of the interactions that take place between teachers and pupils. The reciprocal nature of these interactions captures the changeable nature of classroom life, requiring teachers to respond flexibly in the immediate act of teaching, rather than implementing "pedagogy as practice" (Alexander, 2008b, p. 30) in a linear or mechanistic fashion.

7.2.7.1 Section summary

Robin Alexander's work has captured a complex view of educational practices. However, this section has argued that an account of how such a definition of pedagogy is enacted in day-to-day practice remains largely underdeveloped at present. This current small-scale study clearly cannot fully address this very large task. However, my study can be viewed as having made a step forward by identifying 'negotiation' and 'responsiveness' as key features that would seem to underpin the form of pedagogy captured in this revised definition. The reciprocal nature of relationships revealed by this study highlights how teachers and pupils can simultaneously shape classroom practices, drawing out a more prominent place for pupil agency than is explicitly provided in Alexander's definition. Figure 7-1 highlights how 'negotiation' and 'responsiveness' interweave with 'ideas' and 'practice', making direct connections between a general definition of pedagogy and the central teaching processes that underpin it.

‘Pedagogy’ is not a commonly used term by teachers working in school settings (Waring and Evans, 2015; Watkins and Mortimore, 1999; Yates, 2009). Making connections to classroom practice in this section should present the term ‘pedagogy’ in a more accessible form. Engaging with Figure 7-1 could help practising teachers better understand their classroom practice and provide student teachers a clear sense of how an interactive form of teaching can be brought to life and productive relationships for learning can be fostered.

7.3 Investigating Teachers’ Day-To-Day Practice: Closing Remarks

7.3.1 General summary

The aim of this research study was to investigate teachers’ day-to-day practice and provide a ‘fresh’ interpretation of classroom life. This aim emerged from my own professional interest in teachers’ actions as they work with pupils in school settings and a dissatisfaction with how the majority of existing research studies have investigated this topic. Since existing research has tended to present teachers’ actions in class and the salient discourses and contextual influences in isolation from each other, this dualism has underplayed the complex nature of classroom life and presented a limited interpretation of teachers’ professional capabilities. Therefore, I was eager to investigate teachers’ practice in a way that provided a “bigger picture” (Alexander, 2008a) interpretation by simultaneously documenting teachers’ actions in the classroom while tracing the wider influences that appeared to inform and shape these practices.

Drawing on this professional interest in teachers’ practice and my dissatisfaction with existing research, the main research questions for this thesis became:

- What are the key features of these physical education teachers’ day-to-day actions in the classroom?
- What are the purposes and contextual influences that inform and shape these physical education teachers’ practices?

To support my efforts to answer these research questions, I referred to a broad range of education, physical education, and methodological research literature. In particular, drawing on the general education and the physical education literature provided various definitions of pedagogy that extended my views of educational practice. Revisiting the interactionist branch of the British sociology of education movement presented vital insights about classroom research too valuable for this thesis to ignore. Indeed, both sets of literature – definitions of pedagogy and interactionist classroom research – were key influences on early constructions of, and later modifications to, the research questions in this thesis.

Correspondingly, drawing on the methodological literature to investigate these research questions, I adopted an interpretivist perspective, more specifically, the philosophical insights of symbolic interaction and social constructionism. These theoretical lenses provided a means for me to start engaging with the highly complex nature of educational settings. Another important, related insight gleaned from these theoretical lenses was a reminder, and reassurance, that I would never be able to represent a ‘real’ account of teachers’ practices to my readership. Consequently, employing these theoretical perspectives led me to adopt a methodological stance informed by constructionist grounded theory texts (Charmaz, 2006, 2014; Clarke, 2005) and pursue an approach to analysis discussed in an earlier chapter of this thesis (pp. 100-145).

I employed qualitative observation and interview research methods to generate a theoretical framework to represent teachers’ day-to-day practice. Investigating the research questions using observation *and* interview methods generated a substantial amount of data about participant teachers’ classroom practices. My analysis of these data generated a considerable number of ‘findings’ and it was challenging to separate out the ‘messy’ nature of participant teachers’ practices into discrete findings chapters. To address the research questions in a clearly structured fashion this current chapter presented seven key themes. Engaging with these key themes provided opportunities to answer systematically the research questions while pointing out the methodological strengths and weaknesses of this

study. More specifically, the research questions were addressed using the following key themes:

- Research question 1 corresponds with ‘challenging and supporting ‘direct’ teaching’ and ‘(re)conceptualising teaching as a highly dynamic enterprise’;
- Research question 2 corresponds with ‘highly competent teachers: relationships as a shared consensus?’

The exposition of these key themes should enable a reader to judge whether my research has successfully answered these research questions.

The next section of this chapter will revisit some insights from these seven key themes and suggest implications and recommendations for the following key stakeholders: teachers, researchers, teacher educators, and policy makers.

7.3.2 Implications and recommendations

Looking first at implications for practising teachers, I would argue that this thesis has shown it is possible for teachers to employ a broad repertoire of approaches as they interact with pupils in school settings. Recognising the needs and abilities of the pupils, alongside a set of common factors influencing and shaping teacher-pupil relationships – respect, familiarity, time, context – enabled participant teachers to make decisions about how best to employ their broad repertoire of teaching approaches. While my study has presented an account of what these competent teachers do in practice, I do not wish to conclude this thesis by offering a prescription about how ‘good’ practice in education and physical education ‘ought to be’. Given the ‘interactive mix’ of the four common factors of relationships (respect, familiarity, time, context), and the influence these seem to have on the decisions teachers make about practice, I do not think a single, prescriptive recommendation for ‘good’ practice can exist. Rather, I hope the theoretical framework generated from this research study contributes to the

profession in a positive way by helping teachers better understand their current practice and suggesting possible teaching options for future practice.

Additionally, if a single, prescriptive recommendation for ‘good’ practice cannot exist, then I propose it is important for teachers to start actively exploring definitions of pedagogy. My decision to make explicit use of the term ‘pedagogy’ in this thesis was not to question or challenge the pedagogical worth of current practices in school settings. It was, in fact, the complete opposite. I believe there is much ‘good’ practice taking place in school settings on a day-to-day basis.

However, I would argue that pedagogy provided the potential for me to understand and tolerate the inherently ‘messy’ nature of educational settings.

While I want to move away from making a single recommendation for ‘good’ practice, the expanded definition of pedagogy presented in Figure 7-1 provides insights to make *broad* recommendations for practice. The interwoven nature of pedagogy presented in this thesis provides a sufficient degree of detail to advance ‘responsiveness’ and ‘negotiation’ as central processes for teachers to actively engage with the ‘dynamic’ nature of class settings while providing terminology for communicating these ideas to colleagues.

Given that pedagogy is not a term commonly adopted by teachers to discuss their practice, I acknowledge there are a number of challenges associated with making these recommendations. Grouping definitions of pedagogy into three main camps in an earlier chapter should have presented this term in a more accessible form.

Therefore, I hope this analysis of pedagogy raises the profile of the term, increasing the likelihood of teachers in school settings embracing these ideas.

Furthermore, engaging with Figure 7-1 and the revised definition that this study revealed on p. 266, should have made explicit the connections between theoretical definitions of pedagogy and the realities of day-to-day life in classrooms. My efforts in this thesis to demonstrate what this definition might look like in practice should, also, increase the accessibility of the term pedagogy and the possibility of practising teachers employing these ideas to better understand their classroom practice.

Turning to implications for researchers, my review of preceding research documenting teachers' practice in schools has been highly critical throughout this thesis. It has not been my intention to suggest that some forms of research should be abandoned, but rather I am concerned with the potentially negative consequences of a small number of research designs dominating representations of teachers' practice in the literature. For instance, I took particular issue with the extent to which process-product research designs have dominated classroom studies in education generally (Rex *et al.*, 2006; Saha and Dworkin, 2009) and physical education in particular (Macdonald *et al.*, 2002). An over-reliance on these studies has created an illusory picture of teachers' practice in the classroom, based on the methodological constraints of experimental research designs (Rovegno, 2009). My study has not only shown classroom settings to be far more dynamic and unpredictable places, but also that teachers accomplish a lot more in practice than the findings from studies involving process-product research designs suggest. I hope that this thesis has demonstrated how important is it for researchers to review the research designs they privilege and the resulting impact of these designs on future conceptions of teachers' practice.

Finally, if there is a mismatch between the conceptions of teaching presented in the literature and the day-to-day practices of teachers working in school settings, then there are major implications for initial teacher educators and policy makers. For instance, existing research literature may inform both initial teacher educators' efforts to prepare adequately a cohort of students for school-based teaching placements and policy makers' plans about future recommendations for practice. Thus, I suggest there is an urgent requirement for teacher educators and policy makers to critically appraise the research literature. Drawing on studies employing a wider range of research perspectives, coupled with scrutiny of their methodological design, could present a realistic picture of school settings to guide the decisions of teacher educators and policy makers. For teacher educators, the preparation of teachers could be more closely aligned with the day-to-day challenges of school settings, thereby providing student teachers with a clear sense of how to bring teaching practices to life. For policy makers, recommendations for

change could be advanced from a more robust interpretation of the status quo, thereby formulating future ambitions for practice that are achievable by teachers working in school settings.

Given the insights gained from documenting teachers' everyday practice in this thesis, one possible solution to the problems uncovered with existing research could be to move away from the position where academic scholars completely dominate the research landscape. This thesis has recognised that teachers themselves have valuable thoughts and practices to share with academic scholars. An increase in the number of studies employing naturalistic research designs may help to re-shape conceptions of teaching in physical education. Additionally, if academic scholars and teachers can work more closely together through the inter-related developments in practitioner inquiry (Casey, 2013a, b; Goodyear, *et. al.*, 2013; Munn, 2008; O'Sullivan *et. al.*, 2010) and self-study (Ovens and Fletcher, 2014; Samaras, 2011), then the ideas teachers initiate and sustain in practice can start to supplement the existing research scholarship.

7.3.3 Limitations and directions for future research

The broad investigative stance adopted in this study enabled a considerable number of findings to emerge and this provided extensive insights into teachers' classroom practices. These findings indicate a number of fruitful directions for future research, which I will discuss in more detail shortly. However, there is the possibility a reader could perceive these broad ranging research interests as a *major* limitation of the present study. For instance, a reader could argue that these findings have presented an outline sketch of teachers' practice, but this picture lacks a sufficient level of detail in a number of places. Accordingly, interwoven into the discussions in subsequent paragraphs, will be efforts to point out four main limitations associated with the broad scope of the present study and attempts to identify corresponding directions for future research.

Firstly, the present study adopted a ‘fluid camp’ interpretation of pedagogy to guide the research process. I have often wondered how, if at all, adopting an alternate interpretation of pedagogy would have changed the findings of this present study. For instance, earlier chapters of this thesis acknowledged the potential instead for a ‘transformative camp’ interpretation of pedagogy to guide this study. The possibilities for interrogating current practices in education and physical education settings were acknowledged. However, for the purposes of this thesis, a ‘fluid camp’ interpretation was justified on the grounds that we have yet to capture a sufficiently broad picture of teachers’ practice let alone try to interrogate practice to instigate emancipation and change. Therefore, one limitation of this study is that a ‘fluid camp’ interpretation of pedagogy may have ignored the responsibility to confront directly the inequities and injustices that operate in educational settings. There is a need for future research to probe further the ‘transformative camp’ interpretations of pedagogy to interrogate existing practice and make recommendations for change towards more equitable experiences for teachers and pupils.

Secondly, a key concern of this current study was to strike a balance between mapping teachers’ actions in the classroom *and* tracing the purposes and contextual influences underpinning these practices. Finding a balance between these two dimensions of teachers’ practice was crucial to start bridging the gap recognised in existing research literature (LeCompte, 2009; Lee, 2003). While dividing my attention between these two dimensions provided a broad outline picture of teachers’ practice, I was unable to report some findings in detail or spend extended periods looking for possible confounding influences on these findings. Recognising the potential for more detail to be added to sections of this outline sketch, there is scope to investigate further both these dimensions of teachers’ practice in my future research efforts.

On the one hand, future research in relation to teachers’ classroom actions could involve:

1. Elaborating and refining the details provided in the prototype versions of the five framing categories using a similar research design to the present study.
2. Exploring the strengths and limitations of the five framing categories with a wider population of teachers working in various subject areas and across primary and secondary school contexts.
3. Exploring how teachers' actions, as depicted by the five framing categories, correspond with established theories of learning in the literature and the learning experiences of pupils in school classrooms.

On the other hand, future research in relation to purposes and contextual influences shaping practice could involve:

1. Adopting a poststructuralist perspective (Wright, 2006) to conduct a discourse analysis of how teachers engage with, take up, and actively resist discourses related to 'education' and 'physical education'.
2. Further exploring the contextual demands of teachers' worlds and workplace settings by employing specific analysis frameworks, such as Corbin and Strauss' (2008) "conditional matrices" or Clarke's (2005) "situational analysis".
3. Focusing on teachers' lives beyond school settings. One possible route could be to focus on how teachers' backgrounds – in relation to, for instance, ethnicity, gender, and social class – inform observable practices in school classrooms. Another possible route could be to trace how teachers' life experiences – in relation to, for example, teacher socialisation and teacher identity – shape observable practices in school classrooms.

Thirdly, the broad investigative span of this study led me to focus attention on individual teachers working in six different schools. However, a reader could perceive the decision to focus on six individual teachers as a limitation of this study. For instance, it was not possible to consider extensively how the colleagues

of these participant teachers may have influenced the classroom practices reported in this study. Likewise, within the scope of this study, it was not possible to consult extensively with the pupils taking part in the classes observed to gather their views about ‘good’ practice in educational settings. Thus, further research, for example, could involve consulting the colleagues of teachers from wider departments in schools and listening to the pupils’ voices about day-to-day practice in school classrooms.

Lastly, I wish to make a point about the inductive approach used to analyse the bulk of research data and consider its theoretical implications for this present study. This study largely employed an inductive, ‘bottom-up’ approach to analyse the research data. There is a danger, however, that a reader could view this ‘bottom-up’ analysis, and the substantive theorising it offers about individual teachers working in specific school settings, as making a quite limited contribution to existing knowledge in the educational literature. Indeed, one might also view my refusal to employ formal theories to understand and interpret the data gathered about teachers’ practices – such as those advanced by Foucault, Bourdieu, Goffman, and Latour – as a major limitation of this study. In contrast, I would argue the inductive approach adopted in this study was not a limitation in itself, but rather it was a vital decision to remain open and alert during analysis to enable novel interpretations of practice to emerge.

The inductive, grounded approach to analysis has restricted this study from making any bold claims about teachers’ practice. While the theoretical framework presented in earlier chapters of this study provides an interpretive rendering of the participant teachers’ practice, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to raise these ideas into a formal theory. However, following Charmaz (2014), there is scope for future research to investigate further the theoretical framework. One possible line of enquiry could be to use the theoretical framework to consider how these substantive ideas about practice challenge and extend the formal theories currently employed in educational research studies. Another line of enquiry could be to investigate the extent to which this theoretical framework helps teachers “make

sense of the murky musings and knotty problems” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 128) associated with classroom teaching.

7.3.4 Final reflections

Carrying out this research study with participant teachers has enabled me to grasp the inherently ‘messy’ and complex nature of day-to-day classroom practice. I have been able to provide a fine-grained picture of teachers’ actions **and** a broad outline of the various influences that appear to shape these practices, which many past studies have not managed to achieve. From the outset of this study, I aimed to generate a theoretical framework to understand teachers’ classroom practices. I hope working with participant teachers to construct this framework adds to the credibility of these ideas and provides insights other teachers find valuable for classroom practice. The following quotation, taken from the closing stages of Gaynor’s interview, provides much optimism for the ways in which the theoretical framework presented in the current study could positively influence the teaching profession:

I knew I had sort of different approaches...I wouldn’t have necessarily been able to maybe bracket them as you have, so it’s good to kind of reflect on what you’ve seen and observed and I think actually, yeah, that’s pretty spot-on...I maybe sometimes...kind of criticise myself for not putting enough thinking into what I’m doing or like behind what I’m doing, but from our chat just now, and thinking about it, I think I have [put thinking into or behind my practice].

My professional experience as a teacher and the findings of my study indicate that classroom life is a ‘messy’ and complex endeavour. As we can see from Gaynor’s comments above, teachers do indeed grapple to make sense of this complexity. Accordingly, the theoretical framework that this thesis presents – and further research – could help practising teachers make sense of their practice and tolerate the challenging nature of classroom life.

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Appendix A

Participant background questionnaire

Participant Background Questionnaire					
Personal Information					
Name:		Age:		Gender (please circle) M F	
Teaching Experience (years) - please circle					
0 – 3	4 - 7	8 - 15	16 - 23	24 - 30	31+
Initial Teacher Education					
Institution:					
B.Ed. course:		PGCE/PGDE course:		Other (Please Name):	
		First Degree course:			
Recent CPD and Areas of Professional Interest					
Courses/Activities:		Dates:		Comments:	
School Information					
Name of School:		Current position in school(s) (e.g., probationary teacher, main grade teacher, principal teacher):		Duration of service at current school:	
Briefly comment on the community setting of your school (e.g., socio-economic level, location, community physical activity provision, parental involvement):					

Appendix B

Participant information sheet (teachers)



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Study Outline

Aim

There has been a lack of research documenting physical education teachers' practice in Scotland. To address this recognised need, the aim of this study is to understand the key features of secondary school physical education teachers' practice.

Central to establishing these key features will be an awareness of the local and wider influences that come to bear on teachers' practice and how these inform what teachers actually do in their classes. The study will focus on teachers' practice within the broad educational experience in S1 – S3.

Participants

The study will follow six physical education teachers in their school context. Selecting a group of teachers who individually display features in their practice that are distinct from the others included in the study is an important part of the research design. This variety across the teachers participating in the study will enable a framework to emerge from the research that presents a broad picture of teachers' practice.

The study intends to inform our understanding of physical education in Scotland. Accordingly, identifying participants who have a reputation as capable practitioners may lead the profession to view the study as more credible and enhance the likelihood of the results informing teachers' practice.

What does the study want to find out?

The study will be guided by the following questions:

- What are the key features of physical education teachers' day-to-day actions with S1 – S3 classes?

- What are the different influences on physical education teachers' practice?
- How do physical education teachers construct their own version(s) of teaching physical education?

What will the study involve?

- Observations will be conducted to view the teacher 'in action'. This will involve the researcher coming into a teacher's classes once every three to four weeks to observe lessons with S1 – S3 pupils. Observations are scheduled to last from January 2013 – July 2013. There will be flexibility in relation to the date, time, and number of all observations to be carried out. The purpose of these observations is to understand what is happening in teachers' classes and use this information as a starting point from which to develop a general framework to capture key features of practice.
- Interviews will explore the influences affecting physical education teachers' practice. These interviews will take place after all observations of practice are complete and are most likely to be conducted from August 2013 – December 2013. This would involve individuals participating in around one or two interviews about their practice lasting approximately one hour. All interviews will be voice-recorded, but this information will remain confidential (see the ethical information in the next section for more details). There will be flexibility in relation to the date, time, number, and location of all interviews to be carried out.

Ethical Information

The information collected as part of this study will be treated in strict confidence. All electronic data will be stored on a password protected computer and all hard copies of data will be stored in a lockable unit at the University of Edinburgh. The data collected from your participation in the study will only be used for this PhD thesis, for academic papers and for conference presentations. Participants can receive any documents and publications that arise out of their participation by contacting the researcher. When the results of the study are reported, a pseudonym will be used to protect the identity of teachers and the schools at which they work; the researcher will be the only person to know the pseudonyms used and the identities of teachers and their schools.

Appendix C

Participant consent form (teachers)



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Participant Consent Form

I confirm that I have received information from Paul McMillan relating to my participation in his research study. This research is being conducted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh, under the supervision of Dr. Charles Anderson, Dr. Gillian Robinson, and Dr. Mike Jess. I understand that giving my consent to participate in this research study will involve the following commitments:

- **Being observed** while teaching S1 – S3 classes;
- Participating in **recorded interviews** to discuss issues relating to my practice.

I understand my participation in this research is voluntary. I have been made aware that I am entitled to be treated fairly and sensitively and that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.

I have been assured that any information collected as part of this study will be treated in strict confidence. I am aware that my identity and school will remain anonymous and I have been informed of the conditions under which this information will be stored.

I understand that all data collected will only be used for this PhD thesis, for academic papers and for conference presentations. It has been made clear that I can contact Paul McMillan if I would like to receive any documents and publications that arise out of my participation in the study.

If I have any queries about the research, I know that I can contact Paul McMillan on 0131651 4115 or at paul.mcmillan@ed.ac.uk. Alternatively, I know I can contact Paul McMillan's supervisors: Dr. Charles Anderson: c.d.b.anderson@ed.ac.uk; Dr Gillian Robinson at gillian.robinson@ed.ac.uk; Dr Mike Jess at mike.jess@ed.ac.uk.

My signature below confirms my consent to participate in the study.

Signed:

Name (please print):

Date:

Appendix D

Participant consent form (pupils)



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Research Study in Secondary Physical Education

Parental and Pupil Information Sheet

Who is conducting the study?

My name is Paul McMillan and I am a PhD candidate at the University of Edinburgh. I would like to investigate the key features of secondary school physical education teachers' practice. I hope that my study enhances our understanding within the profession and improves children's learning experiences in physical education. If you have any questions about this research study, please contact me directly on 0131651 4115 or at paul.mcmillan@ed.ac.uk.

What does the study involve?

The study will follow six physical education teachers in their school context to investigate the key features of their practice. A central part of the study will involve observing and taking notes to document physical education teachers 'in action'. This would involve the researcher coming into a teacher's classes once every two to three weeks to observe lessons with S1 to S3 pupils. The observations will mainly focus on the teacher and the way in which they deliver physical education. My notes will focus on recording interactions between the teacher and the class as a collective group and/or smaller sub-groups of children. Observations are scheduled to take place in the period of April 2013 to July 2013.

Confidentiality

The information collected as part of this study will be treated in strict confidence. When the results of the study are reported, a pseudonym will be used to protect the identity of teachers and the schools at which they work; the researcher will be the only person to know the pseudonyms used and the identities of teachers and their schools. The names of individual pupils **will not** be used when the results of the study are reported.

Use of results

The data will only be used for this PhD study, for academic papers and for conference presentations.

Consent

I would be most grateful if parents would allow their child to participate in this research study. I also ask that parents discuss the research with their child and check that they are willing to take part in the study. Participation is on a voluntary basis and children have the right to withdraw from the observations at any time without consequence. I would be willing to explain my research to the children and discuss the purpose of my presence in their class. If you **do not** want your child to take part in this research study, and/or if your child **does not** want to take part, please complete and return the attached reply slip.

Research Study in Secondary Physical Education

Only complete this form if you **DO NOT** want to take part in the research study.

Return the reply slip to Seymour by Friday 26 April 2013 if you **DO NOT** want to take part. If this form is not returned, I will assume that your child will be participating in the study.

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Research Study in Secondary Physical Education

I want to withdraw my child from the physical education observations and/or **my child wants to withdraw** from the physical education observations. My signature below confirms that my child **WILL NOT** participate in the study.

Pupil name: _____

Name of school: _____

Parent/guardian's name: _____

Parent/guardian's signature: _____

Date: _____

Please return this form to Seymour.

Appendix E

Interview schedule

Gaynor's Formal Interviews - A Guide

AN INITIAL QUESTION: GENERAL EXPERIENCES OF THE OBSERVATIONS

Q: Can you tell me about your experiences of being involved in the research observations?

Probes

- How, if at all, did the open-ended nature of the observations and the fact I wasn't looking for you to implement a specific intervention make you feel at the beginning of the study?
- How, if at all, did the long term and on-going nature of the research make you feel over time?
- Tell me about how comfortable you felt in carrying out your day-to-day work during the observations.
- So are you saying...have I got that right?

INTERMEDIATE QUESTIONS: VARIATION IN HER APPROACH

Q: I've seen much variation in the way you work with pupils. This includes teacher directed practice where you might be really clear about how/where/when pupils perform a particular task (what you called a 'structured approach'), teacher guided practice where you might lead pupils in different ways with forms of questioning, options, and choices, and what I've called teacher-pupil negotiation in practice where the way ahead in a lesson/next lesson/next unit of work might be discussed and debated with pupils. Would you say that was a fair representation of the way you tend to work with classes?

Probes

- If I go to my observations can I check a few things? **Teacher directed practice as:** The teacher 'in charge' and setting content and flow of a lesson. Using a lot of explaining, demonstrating, re-stating of the task, praising and encouraging, seeking particular knowledge/ideas/skills to be achieved, pupils following classroom routines/instructions, pupils performing actions/techniques/activities...have I got this factually accurate?
- Can I check that for more **teacher guided practice** may involve: The teacher engaging in explaining, discussing, short and longer response questioning, some instances of investigating/discovery to move a class or group in a *desired* direction, the teacher looking for particular knowledge. The pupils respond to the teacher, share some information and ideas in pairs/groups, allowing pupils to 'choose' how the lesson proceeds from a set of limited options...have I got this factually accurate?

- Can I also check that **teacher-pupil negotiation in practice** may involve:
The way ahead in a lesson/a particular task/content in a lesson or unit of work is discussed and openly debated between teacher-pupil(s), aiming to find the middle ground and reaching a compromise that is suitable for both teacher and pupil(s). This usually involves pupils suggesting class content, pupils choosing from a range of options, and/or the teacher offering choice/independent work/negotiating with pupils...is that about right?
- In thinking about the different ways you work with pupils, are there things that you want to add in or comment on in more detail?
- Can you tell me a bit more about the way your teaching practice might alter across classes/year groups/certain activities/settings?
- What are some of the things that you draw upon so as to teach classes in these different ways?
- So are you saying...have I got that right?

INTERMEDIATE QUESTIONS: RESPONSIVENESS OF HER APPROACH

Q: In working in these different ways, what are the things that you consider *in advance* to inform or guide your practice?

Probes

- What makes you able to think ahead or imagine what might be 'appropriate' practice?
- Do you ever have a 'plan B' or a 'plan C' in mind?
- What role, if any, does a specific class play in your thinking ahead about what might be 'appropriate' practice?
- Are there more general things about the age and stage of S1 or S2 or S3 classes that help you to imagine what might be 'appropriate' practice?
- How do the very 'real' things of time/rules/roles/safety influence proceedings?
- What problems do you encounter in considering your practice *in advance* of a lesson?
- In what ways do the department and/or your colleagues' views guide your actions?

Q: Can you identify moments where your teaching practice might have to change tack very quickly in a lesson?

Probes

- In responding in this *immediate way*, or not so, what are the things that you draw upon *in the moment* to inform or guide your practice?
- Under what circumstances might you revise the planned approach?
- What is it, specifically, that allows you to respond in this way?
- Have you always been able to work in this way?
- So are you saying...have I got that right?

INTERMEDIATE QUESTIONS: GETTING THE CLASS TO WORK WELL

Q: In working with a class and deciding on a teaching approach, what are the key things you do to get the class to work well?

Probes

- Are you and the pupils always on the ‘same page’ for how a lesson might be taken ahead?
- Can you describe some of the ways that you get the pupils ‘on side’ or to ‘buy in’ to your ideas for how a lesson might develop?
- What problems, if any, arise in trying to keep the class moving in a particular direction?
- How do you handle some of the moments where pupils might resist the class moving in a particular direction?
- If I go to my observations, I’ve sometimes noticed that you have to work really actively to get the class to move in a desired direction: what I have called various forms of negotiation. This includes: some **bargaining** where you can strike a deal with a class; some what you called an **incentive** where you offer a reward for compliance; sometimes where you **assert authority** by raising your and when you **appeal to the moral side** of pupils, and times when you **persuade pupils** with examples/promises that your class will be different/illustrations to convince pupil of your ideas or intentions... have I got that right?

END QUESTIONS: FINAL COMMENTS

Q: Is there anything about your teaching practice that you might not have thought about until it has ‘cropped up’ during our discussion today?

Q: Is there anything else I should know to better understand the different ways that you work with classes?

Q: Is there anything you would like to ask me?

Appendix F

My ‘messy’ map for Seymour

My 'Messy' Situational Map For Seymour

I used the following questions as a guide: Who and what are in the situation?
Which elements make the most difference in the situation?



